This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

256 e · 14402

THE

CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY.

A Tale.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

REGINA MARIA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF

THE HOUSES OF OSMA AND ALMERIA, TRECOTHICK BOWER, MONASTERY OF ST. COLUMB, &c. &c.

A matchless pair,
With equal virtue form'd, and equal grace;
The same, distinguish'd by their sex alone:
Hers the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his the radiance of the risen day. THOMSON.

SEVENTH EDITION.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE

Minerva-Press,

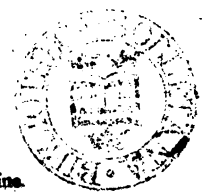
FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.

LEADENHALL-STREET.

1815.

THE

CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY.



CHAP. I.

Cease then, ah cease! fond mortal, to repine
At laws which Nature wisely did ordain;
Pleasure, what is it, rightly to define?—
'Tis but a short-liv'd interval from pain;
Or rather each, alternately renew'd,
Gives to our lives a sweet vicissitude. BROWN.

THE emotions Amanda experienced from reading this narrative, deeply affected, but gradually subsided in her mind, leaving it only occupied by pity for the penitent Lady Dunreath, and pleasure at the prospect of Oscar's independence—a pleasure so pure, so fervent, that it had power to steal her from her sorrows; and when the recollection of them again returned, she endeavoured to banish it, by thinking of the necessity there was for immediately adopting some plan for the disclosure of the will Lady Dunreath had advised her to put into the hands of a

friend of integrity and abilities.—"But where," cried the desolate Amanda, "can I find such a friend?" The few, the very few whom she had reason to think regarded her, had neither power nor ability to assist her in what would probably be an arduous demand for restitution.

After sitting a considerable time in deep meditation, the idea of Rushbrook suddenly occurred, and she started, as if in joyful surprise at the remembrance. She considered that, though almost a stranger to him, an application of such a nature must rather be regarded as a compliment than a liberty, from the great opinion it would prove she had of his honour, by entrusting him with such a secret. From his looks and manner, she was well convinced he would not only deeply feel for the injured, but ably advise how those injuries should be redressed. From his years and situation, there could be no impropriety in addressing him; and she already, in imagination, beheld him her friend, advocate, and adviser: he also, she trusted, would be able to put her in a way of making inquiries after Oscar. Oh, how delightful the prospect of discovering that brother—of discovering but to put him in possession of even a splendid independence! Ah, how sweet the idea of being again folded to a heart interested in her welfare, after being so long a solitary mourner, treading the rugged path of life, and bending as she went, beneath its adverse storm! Ah, how sweet again to meet an eye which would beam with tenderness on hers,

hers, an ear which would listen with attentive rapture to her accents, and a voice that would sooth, with softest sympathy, her sorrows! It is only those who, like her, have known the social ties of life in all their sweetness, who, like her, have mourned their loss with all the bitterness of anguish, that can possibly conceive her feelings, as these ideas occurred to her mind. "Oh, Oscar! oh, my brother!" she exclaimed, while tears wet her pale cheeks, "how rapturous the moment which restores you to me! how delightful to think your youth will no more experience the chill of poverty, your benevolence no longer suffer restraints! Now will your virtues shine forth with full lustre, dignifying the house from which you have descended, doing service to your country, and spreading diffusive happiness around."

The morning surprised Amanda in the midst of her meditations: she opened her shutters, and hailed its first glories in the eastern hemisphere. The sunbeams exhaling the mists of the valley, displayed its smiling verdure, forming a fine contrast to the deep shadows that yet partially enveloped the surrounding mountains: the morning breeze gently agitated the old trees, from whose bending heads unnumbered birds arose, and, in their matin notes, seemed to consecrate the first return of day to the great Author of light and life. Spontaneous praise burst from the lips of Amanda, and she felt all that calm and sweet delight which ever pervades a mind of religion and sensibility, on viewing the rural beauties of nature.

She left the charming scene to try and get a little rest; but she thought not of undressing. She soon sunk into a gentle sleep, and awoke with renovated spirits, near the breakfast hour.

Mrs. Bruce expressed the utmost regret at the necessity there was for parting with her guests; but added, that she believed, as well as hoped, their absence from her would be but short, as she was sure the Marquis's family would leave Scotland almost immediately after Lady Euphrasia's nuptials. In vain did Amanda struggle for fortitude to support the mention of those nuptials—her frame trembled, her heart sickened, whenever they were talked of. The spirits she had endeavoured to collect, from the idea that they would be all requisite in the important affair she must undertake, fleeted away at Mrs. Bruce's words, and a heavy languor took possession of her.

They did not leave the Abbey till after tea in the evening; and the idea that she might soon behold her brother, the acknowledged heir of that Abbey, cast again a gleam of pleasure on the sad heart of Amanda; a gleam, I say, for it faded before the almost instantaneous recollection, that, ere that period, Lord Mortimer and Lady Euphrasia would be united.—Sunk in a profound melancholy, she forgot her situation, heeded not the progress of the carriage, or remarked any object. A sudden jolt roused her from her reverie, and she blushed as she thought of the suspicions it might give rise to in the mind of Mrs.

Mrs. Duncan, whose intelligent eye, on the preceding night, had more than half-confessed her knowledge of Amanda's feelings. She now, though with some embarrassment, attempted to enter into conversation; and Mrs. Duncan, who, with deep attention, had marked her pensive companion, with much cheerfulness rendered the attempt a successful one.

The chaise was now turning from the valley, and Amanda leaned from the window to take another view of Dunreath Abbey. The sun was already sunk below the horizon, but a track of glory still remained, that marked the spot in which its daily course was finished. A dubious lustre yet played around the spires of the Abbey, and, while it displayed its vast magnificence, by contrast, added to its gloom—a gloom heightened by the dreary solitude of its situation, for the valley was entirely overshadowed by the dark projection of the mountains, on whose summits a few bright and lingering beams yet remained, that shewed the wild shrubs waving in the evening breeze. A pensive spirit seemed now to have taken possession of Mrs. Duncan, a spirit congenial to the scene, and the rest of the little journey was passed almost in silence.

Their lodgings were at the entrance of the town, and Mrs. Bruce had taken care they should find every requisite refreshment within them. The woman of the house had already prepared a comfortable supper for them, which was served up soon after their arrival. When over, Mrs. Duncan, assisted by

Amanda, put the children to bed, as she knew, till accustomed to her, they would not like the attendance of the maid of the house. Neither she nor Amanda felt sleepy; it was a fine moonlight night, and they were tempted to walk out upon a terrace, to which a glass-door from the room opened.

The terrace overhung a deep valley, which stretched to the sea; and the rocky promontory that terminated it was crowned with the ruins of an ancient castle: the moonbeams seemed to sleep upon its broken battlements, and the waves that stole murmuring to the shore cast a silvery spray around it. A pensive pleasure pervaded the hearts of Mrs. Duncan and Amanda; and conversing on the charms of the scene, they walked up and down; when suddenly, upon the floating air, they distinguished the sound of a distant drum, beating the tattoo. Both stopped, and leaned upon a fragment of a parapet wall, which had once stretched along the terrace; and Mrs. Duncan, who knew the situation of the country, said, that the sounds they heard proceeded from a fort near the town. They ceased in a short time, but were almost immediately succeeded by martial music, and Amanda soon distinguished an admired march of her father's. Ah! how affectingly did it remind her of him! She recalled the moments in which she had played it for him, whilst he hung over her chair with delight and tenderness. She wept at the tender remembrance it excited, wept at listening to the sounds which had so often given to his

pale

pale cheek the flush of ardour.—They did not return to the house till convinced, by a long interval of silence, that the music had ceased for the night.

Amanda having formed a plan relative to the will, determined not to delay executing it. She had often mentioned to Mrs. Duncan her uneasiness concerning her brother, as an excuse for the melancholy that lady, in a half-serious, half-jesting manner, so often rallied her about; and she now intended to assign her journey to London, (which she was resolved should immediately take place) to her anxious wish of discovering, or at least inquiring about him. The next morning she accordingly mentioned her intention. Mrs. Duncan was not only surprised, but concerned, and endeavoured to dissuade her from it, by representing, in the most forcible manner, the dangers she might experience in so long a journey, without a protector.—Amanda assured her she was already aware of these; but the apprehensions they excited were less painful than the anxiety she suffered on her brother's account; and ended, by declaring her resolution unalterable.

Mrs. Duncan, who, in her heart, could not blame Amanda for such a resolution, now expressed her hopes that she would not make a longer stay in London than was absolutely necessary, declaring that her society would be a loss she could scarcely support.—Amanda thanked her for her kindness, and said, she hoped they would yet enjoy many happy days together. She proposed travelling in a chaise to the

borders of England, and then pursuing the remainder of the journey in a stage-coach. The woman of the house was sent for, and requested to engage a carriage for her against the morning, which she promised to do; and the intervening time was almost entirely passed by Mrs. Duncan in lamenting the approaching loss of Amanda's society, and in entreaties for her to return as soon as possible.—Till this period she did not know, nor did Amanda conceive, the strength of her friendship. She presented her purse to our heroine, and, in the impassioned language of sincerity, entreated her to consider it as the purse of a sister, and take from it whatever was necessary for her long journey, and uncertain stay.—Amanda, who never wished to lie under obligations when she could possibly avoid them, declined this offer; but, with the warmest expressions of gratitude and sensibility, declared (what she thought indeed would be the case) that she had more than sufficient for all her purposes; all therefore she would accept was what Mrs. Duncan owed her.

Mrs. Duncan begged her to take a letter from her to a family near whose house her first day's journey would terminate; they were relations of Mr. Duncan's, she said, and had been extremely kind to him and her: she had kept up a correspondence with them till her removal to Dunreath Abbey, when she dropped it, lest her residence there should be discovered; but such an opportunity of writing to them, by a person who would answer all their inquiries concerning

concerning her, she could not neglect; besides, she continued, they were the most agreeable and hospitable people she had ever known, and she was convinced would not suffer Amanda to sleep at an inn, but would probably keep her a few days at their house, and then escort her part of the way.—Averse to the society of strangers in her present frame of mind, Amanda said she would certainly take the letter, but could not possibly present it herself. She thanked Mrs. Duncan for her solicitous care about her; but added, whether she lodged at an inn or private house for one night, was of little consequence; and as to her journey being retarded, it was what she never could allow.—Mrs. Duncan declared she was too fond of solitude; but did not argue the point with her. She wrote the letter, however.

They took leave of each other at night, as the chaise was ordered at an early hour. As Mrs. Duncan folded Amanda to her heart, she again besought her to hasten back, declaring that neither she or her little girls would be themselves till she returned.

At an early hour Amanda entered the chaise; and as she stepped into it, could not forbear casting a sad and lingering look upon a distant prospect, where, the foregoing evening, a dusky grove of firs had been pointed out to her, as encompassing the Marquis of Rosline's Castle. Ah! how did her heart sicken at the idea of the event which either had, or was so soon to take place, in that Castle! Ah, how did she tremble at the idea of her long and lonesome

journey, and the difficulties she might encounter on its termination! How sad, how solitary did she feel herself! Her mournful eyes filled with tears, as she saw the rustic families hastening to their daily labours; for her mind involuntarily drew a comparison between their situation and her own: and, ah! how sweet would their labour be to her, she thought, if she, like them, was encompassed by the social ties of life! Fears, before unthought of, rose in her mind, from which her timid nature shrunk appalled, should Rushbrook be absent from London, or should he not answer her expectations. "But I deserve disappointment," cried she, "if I thus anticipate it. Oh! let me not be over-exquisite

'To cast the fashion of uncertain evils,'

oppressed, as I already am, with real ones!"—She endeavoured to exert her spirits; she tried to amuse them, by attending to the objects she passed, and gradually they lost somewhat of their heaviness. On arriving in London, she designed going to the haberdasher's, where, it may be remembered, she had once met Miss Rushbrook: here she hoped to procure lodgings, also a direction to Rushbrook.

It was about five when she stopped for the night, as the shortened days of autumn would not permit a longer journey, had the tired horses, which was not the case, been able to proceed. They stopped at the inn which Mrs. Duncan had taken care to know would be the last stage of the first day's journey—a small, but neat and comfortable house, romantically situated

situated at the foot of a steep hill, planted with ancient firs, and crowned with the straggling remains of what appeared to have been a religious house, from a small cross which yet stood over a broken gateway. A stream trickled from the hill, though its murmurs through the thick underwood alone denoted its rising there, and winding round the inn, flowed in meanders through a spacious vale, of which the inn was not the lone inhabitant, for cottages appeared on either side, and one large mansion stood in the centre, whose superior size, and neat plantations, proclaimed it master of the whole. This really was the case; for immediately on entering the inn, Amanda had inquired about the Macqueen family, to whom Mrs. Duncan's letter was directed, and learned that they inhabited this house, and owned the grounds to a large extent surrounding it. Amanda gave Mrs. Duncan's letter to the landlady, and begged she would send it directly to Mrs. Macqueen.

The inn was without company; and its quiet retirement, together with the appearance of the owners, an elderly pair, soothed the agitated spirits of Amanda. Her little dinner was soon served; but when over, and she was left to herself, all the painful ideas she had sedulously, and with some degree of success, attempted to banish from her mind in the morning, by attending to the objects she passed, now returned with full, or rather aggravated, force. Books, those pleasing and, in affliction, alleviating resources, she had forgotten to bring along with her; and all

that the inn contained she had been shewn on a shelf in the apartment she occupied, but without finding one that could possibly fix her attention, or change her melancholy ideas.—A ramble, though the evening was uninviting, she preferred to the passive indulgence of her sorrow; and having ordered tea against her return, and invited the landlady to it, she was conducted to the garden of the inn, from whence she ascended the hill by a winding path. She made her way with difficulty through a path, which, seldom trodden, was half choked with weeds and brambles. The wind blew sharp and cold around her, and the gloom of closing day was heightened by thick and lowering clouds, that involved the distant mountains in one dark shade. Near those mountains she knew the domain of Rosline lay; and from the bleak summit of the hill she surveyed them, as a lone mourner would survey the sad spot in which the treasure of his heart was buried.—Forgetting the purpose for which she had wandered out, she leaned, in melancholy reverie, against a fragment of the ruined building; nor heard approaching footsteps, till the voice of her host suddenly broke upon her ear. She started, and perceived him accompanied by two ladies, who, he directly informed her, were Mrs. and Miss Macqueen. They both went up to Amanda, and, after the usual compliments of introduction were over, Mrs. Macqueen took her hand, and, with a smile of cordial good nature, invited her to her house for the night; declaring, that the pleasure she received

received from Mrs. Duncan's letter was heightened, by being introduced, through its means, to a person that lady mentioned as her particular friend. Miss Macqueen seconded her mother's invitation, and said, the moment they had read the letter, they had come out for the purpose of bringing her back with them. —"Aye, aye," said the host, good-humouredly, who was himself descended from one of the inferior branches of the Macqueens, "this is the way, ladies, you always rob me of my guests. In good faith, I think I must soon change my dwelling, and go higher up the valley."

Conscious, from her utter dejection, that she would be unable, as she wished, to participate in the pleasures of conversation, Amanda declined the invitation, alledging, as an excuse for doing so, her intention of proceeding on her journey the next morning by dawn of day.—Mrs. Macqueen declared, that she should act as she pleased in that respect; and both she and her daughter renewed their entreaties for her company with such earnestness, that Amanda could no longer refuse them; and they returned to the inn, where Amanda begged they would excuse her absence a few minutes, and retired to pay her entertainers, and repeat her charges to the postillion to be at the house as soon as he should think any of the family stirring. She then returned to the ladies, and attended them to their mansion, which might well be termed the seat of hospitality. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Macqueen, four

sons,

sons, and six daughters, now all past childhood, and united to one another by the strictest ties of duty and affection. After residing a few years at Edinburgh for the improvement of the young people, Mr. and Mrs. Macqueen returned to their mansion in the valley, where a large fortune was spent in the enjoyment of agreeable society, and acts of benevolence. Mrs. Macqueen informed Amanda, during the walk, that all her family were now assembled together, as her sons, who were already engaged in different professions and businesses in various parts of the kingdom, made it a constant rule to pay a visit every autumn to their friends.

It was quite dark before the ladies reached the house, and the wind was sharp and cold, so that Amanda found the warmth and light of the drawing-room, to which she was conducted, extremely agreeable. The thick window-curtains and carpetting, and the enlivening fire, bade defiance to the sharpness of the mountain-blast which howled without, and rendered the comforts within more delectable, by the effect of contrast. In the drawing-room were assembled Mr. Macqueen, two of his daughters, and half a dozen ladies and gentlemen, to whom Amanda was presented, and they, in return, to her. In the countenance of Mr. Macqueen, Amanda perceived a benevolence equal to that which irradiated his wife's. Both were past the prime of life, but in him only was its decline visible: he was lately grown so infirm, as to be unable to move without assistance; yet

yet was his relish for society undiminished; and in his arm-chair, his legs muffled in flannel and supported by pillows, he promoted, as much as ever, the mirth of his family, and saw with delight the dance go on, in which he had once mixed with his children. Mrs. Macqueen appeared but as the eldest sister of her daughters; and between them all, Amanda perceived a strong family-likeness: they were tall, well, but not delicately made; handsome, yet more indebted to the animation of their countenances, than to regularity of features for beauty, which was rendered luxuriant by a quantity of rich auburn hair, that, unrestrained by superfluous ornaments, fell in long ringlets on their shoulders, and curled with a sweet simplicity on their white polished foreheads.

"So the boys and girls are not yet returned," said Mrs. Macqueen, addressing one of her daughters: "I am afraid they have taken their friends too far."—She had scarcely spoken, when a party was heard under the windows, laughing and talking, who ascended the stairs immediately in a kind of gay tumult. The drawing-room door opened, and a lady entered, of a most prepossessing appearance, though advanced in life, and was followed by a number of young people. But, oh! what were the powerful emotions of Amanda's soul, when, amongst them, she beheld Lady Araminta Dormer and Lord Mortimer! Shocked, confused, confounded, she strained an eye of agony upon them, as if with the hope of detecting

detecting an illusion, then dropped her head, anxious to conceal herself, though she was fatally convinced she could be but a few minutes unobserved by them. Never, amidst the many trying moments of her life, had she experienced one more dreadful—to behold Lord Mortimer, when she knew his esteem for her was lost; at a period, too, when he was hastening to be united to another woman: oh! it was agony, torture in the extreme! Vainly did she reflect, she deserved not to lose his esteem: this consciousness could not, at present, inspire her with fortitude: her heart throbbed, as if it would burst her bosom; her frame trembled, and she alternately experienced the glow of confusion and the chill of dismay—dismay, at the idea of meeting the silent, but expressive reproach of Lord Mortimer's eye, for her imaginary errors—dismay, at the idea of meeting the contempt of his aunt (who was the lady that first entered the room) and sister.

CHAP. II.

'Twould raise your pity but to see the tears
Force through her snowy lids their melting course,
To lodge themselves on her red murm'ring lips,
That talk such mournful things, when straight a gale
Of starting sighs carry those pearls away,
As dews by winds are wafted from the flow'rs. LEE.

BITTERLY did Amanda regret having been tempted from the inn, and gratefully would she have acquitted Fortune of half its malignancy to her, had she been able to steal back unnoticed. The party that entered, engaged in talking to those they found in the drawing-room, laughing and describing their ramble, which Lady Araminta said was in the style of Will-o'-the-wisp, "over brakes and through briars," were some time before they observed Amanda; but soon, oh! how much too soon did she perceive Mrs. Macqueen approaching, to introduce those of her family who were just returned!—"The trying moment is come!" cried Amanda: "oh, let me not, by my confusion, look as if I really was the guilty thing I am supposed to be!"—She endeavoured to collect herself, and rose to meet the young Macqueens, by a timid glance perceiving that they yet hid her from the eyes she most dreaded to encounter.

ter. She was unable, however, to return their compliments, except by a faint smile; and was again sinking upon her seat, for her frame trembled universally, when Mrs. Macqueen, taking her hand, led her forward, and presented her to Lady Martha and Lady Araminta Dormer. It may be remembered that Lady Martha had never before seen Amanda; she therefore gave her, as Miss Donald, a benignant smile, which, had she supposed her Miss Fitzalan, would have been lost in a contemptuous frown. Seldom, indeed, had she seen a form more interesting than our heroine's: her mourning habit set off the elegance of her form, and the languid delicacy of her complexion, whilst the sad expression of her countenance denoted that habit but the shadow of the unseen grief which dwelt within her soul: her large blue eyes were half concealed by their long lashes, but the beams that stole from beneath those fringed curtains, were full of sweetness and sensibility: her fine hair, discomposed by the jolting of the carriage, and the blowing of the wind, had partly escaped from the braid in which it was turned up under her hat, and hung in long ringlets of glossy brown upon her shoulders, and careless curls about her face, giving a sweet simplicity to it, which heightened its beauty. How different was the look she received from Lady Araminta, to that she had received from Lady Martha! In the expressive countenance of the former, she read surprise, contempt, and anger: her cheeks were flushed with unusual

usual colour, her eyes sparkled with uncommon lustre, and their quick glances pierced the palpitating heart of Amanda, who heard her repeat, as if involuntarily, the name of Donald. Ah, how dreadful was the sound to her ear! Ah, how sad a confirmation did it convey, that every suspicion to her prejudice would now be strengthened! "Ah! why, why," said she to herself, "was I tempted to take this hated name? why did I not prefer incurring any danger to which my own might have exposed me, rather than assume any thing like deceit?"—Happily the party were too much engrossed by one another, to heed the words or manner of Lady Araminta.

Amanda withdrew her hand from Mrs. Macqueen, and moved trembling to her seat; but that lady, with a politeness poor Amanda had reason to think officious, stopped her. "Miss Donald, Lord Mortimer," said she.—Amanda raised her head, but not her eyes, and neither saw or heard his Lordship. The scene she had dreaded was over, and she felt a little relieved at the idea: the haughty glance of Lady Araminta dwelt upon her mind; and when agitation had a little subsided, she stole a look at her, and saw Mrs. Macqueen sitting between her and Lady Martha: and, from the altered countenance of the latter, she instantly conjectured she had been informed by her niece of her real name: she also conjectured, from the glances directed towards her, that she was the subject of conversation; and concluded

it

it was begun for the purpose of discovering whether Mrs. Macqueen knew any thing of her real history.

From these glances she quickly withdrew her own; and one of the young Macqueens drawing a chair near hers, began a conversation, with all that spirit and vivacity which distinguished his family. The mind of Amanda was too much occupied by its concerns to be able to attend to any thing foreign to them; she scarcely knew what she said, and when she did reply, it was only by monosyllables. At last, a question, enforced with peculiar earnestness, roused her from this inattention; and blushing for it, she looked at the young man, and perceiving him regarding her with something like wonder, she now, for the first time, considered the strange appearance she must make amongst the company, if she did not collect and compose her spirits. The family too, to whom she was (she could not help thinking) so unfortunately introduced, from their hospitality, merited attention and respect from her; she resolved, therefore, to struggle with her feelings, and, as an apology for her absent manner, complained, and not without truth, of a headache.

Young Macqueen, with friendly warmth, said he would acquaint his mother, or one of his sisters, with her indisposition, and procure some remedy for it; but she insisted he should on no account disturb the company, assuring him she would soon be well. She then endeavoured to support a conversation with him;

him; but, ah! how often did she pause in the midst of what she was saying, as the sweet insinuating voice of Mortimer reached her ear, who, with his native elegance and spirit, was participating in the lively conversation then going forward! In hers with young Macqueen, she was soon interrupted by his father, who, in a good-humoured manner, told his son he would no longer suffer him to engross Miss Donald to himself, and desired him to lead her to a chair near his.

Young Macqueen immediately arose, and taking Amanda's hand, led her to his father, by whom he seated her, and by whom, on the other side, sat Lady Martha Dormer; then, with a modest gallantry, declared, it was the first time he ever felt reluctance to obey his father's commands, and hoped his ready acquiescence to them would be rewarded with speedy permission to resume his conversation with Miss Donald.—Amanda had hitherto prevented her eyes from wandering, though they could not exclude the form of Lord Mortimer: she had not yet seen his face, and still strove to avoid seeing it. Mr. Macqueen began with various inquiries relative to Mrs. Duncan, to which Amanda, as she was prepared for them, answered with tolerable composure. Suddenly he dropped the subject of his relation, and asked Amanda from what branch of the Donalds she was descended? A question so unexpected, shocked, dismayed, and overwhelmed her with confusion: she made no reply till the question was repeated,

peated, when, in a low and faltering face, her face covered with blushes and almost buried in her bosom, she said she did not know.—"Well," cried he, again changing his discourse, after looking at her a few minutes, "I do not know any girl but yourself would take such pains to hide such a pair of eyes as you have; I suppose you are conscious of the mischief they have the power of doing, and therefore it is from compassion to mankind you try to conceal them."

Amanda blushed yet more deeply than before, at finding her downcast looks were noticed: she turned hers with quickness to Mr. Macqueen, who, having answered a question of Lady Martha's, thus proceeded: "And so you do not know from which branch of the Donalds you are descended? Perhaps now you only forget; and if I was to mention them one by one, your memory might be refreshed. But first let me ask your father's surname, and what countrywoman he married; for the Donalds generally married amongst each other?"

Oh, how forcibly was Amanda, at this moment, convinced (if indeed her pure soul wanted such conviction) of the pain, the shame of deception, let the motive be what it may which prompts it! Involuntarily were her eyes turned from Mr. Macqueen, as he paused for a reply to his last question, and at the moment encountered those of Lord Mortimer, who sat directly opposite to her, and with deep attention regarded her, as if anxious to hear how she would extricate

extricate herself from the embarrassments her assumed name had plunged her into.

Her confusion, her blushes, her too evident distress, were all imputed, by Mrs. Macqueen, to fatigue, at listening to such tedious inquiries. She knew her husband's only foible was an eager desire to trace every one's pedigree; in order, therefore, to relieve Amanda from her present situation, she proposed a party of whist, at which Mr. Macqueen often amused himself, and for which the table and cards were already laid before him. As she took up the cards to hand them to those who were to draw, she whispered Amanda to go over to the tea-table.

Amanda required no repetition now, and thanking Mrs. Macqueen in her heart for the relief she afforded her, went to the table, around which almost all the young people were crowded. So great was the mirth going on amongst them, that Miss Macqueen, the gravest of the set, in vain called upon her sisters to assist her in serving the trays, which the servants handed about, and Mrs. Macqueen had more than once called for. Miss Macqueen made room for Amanda by herself; and Amanda, anxious to do any thing which could keep her from encountering the eyes she dreaded, requested to be employed in assisting her, and was deputed to fill out the coffee. After the first performance of her task, Miss Macqueen, in a whispering voice, said to Amanda, "Do you know, we are all here more than half in love with lord Mortimer: he is certainly very handsome;

some; and his manner is quite as pleasing as his looks, for he has none of that foppery and conceit which handsome men so generally have, and nothing but the knowledge of his engagement could keep us from pulling caps about him. You have heard, to be sure, of Lady Euphrasia Sutherland, the Marquis of Rosline's daughter; well, he is going to be married to her immediately: she, and the Marquis, and the Marchioness, were here the other day. She is not to be compared to Lord Mortimer; but she has what will make her be considered very handsome in the eyes of many, namely, a very large fortune. They only stopped to breakfast here; and ever since we have been on the watch for the rest of the party, who arrived this morning, and were, on Lady Martha's account, whom the journey had fatigued, prevailed to stay till to-morrow. I am very glad you came while they were here. I think both ladies charming women, and Lady Araminta quite as handsome as her brother. But see," she continued, touching Amanda's hand, "the conquering hero comes!"—Lord Mortimer, with difficulty, made his way round the table, and accepted a seat by Miss Macqueen, which she eagerly offered him, and which she contrived to procure, by sitting closer to Amanda. To her next neighbour, a fine lively girl, Amanda now turned, and entered into conversation with her; but from this she was soon called, by Miss Macqueen requesting her to pour out a cup of coffee for Lord Mortimer. Amanda obeyed, and he

rose

rose to receive it; her hand trembled as she presented it. She looked not in his face, but she thought his hand was not quite steady: she saw him lay the cup on the table, and bend his eyes to the ground: she heard Miss Macqueen address him twice ere she received an answer, and then it was so abrupt, that it seemed the effect of sudden recollection. Miss Macqueen now grew almost as inattentive to the table as her sisters, and Mrs. Macqueen was obliged to come over, to know what they were all about.

At length the business of the tea-table was declared over, and almost at the same moment, the sound of a violin was heard from an adjoining room, playing an English country-dance, in which style of dancing the Macqueens had been instructed in Edinburgh, and chose it this evening in compliment to their guests. The music was a signal for universal motion: all, in a moment, was bustle and confusion. The young men instantly selected their partners, who seemed ready to dance from one room to another. The young Macqueen, who had been so assiduous about Amanda, now came, and taking her hand, as if her dancing was a thing of course, was leading her after the rest of the party, when she drew back, declaring she could not dance. Surprised and disappointed, he stood looking at her in silence, as if irresolute whether he should or should not attempt to change her resolution: at last he spoke, and requested she would not mortify him by

a refusal. Mrs. Macqueen, hearing her son's request, came forward and joined in it. Amanda pleaded her headache.—"Do, my dear," said Mrs. Macqueen, "try one dance; my girls will tell you dancing is a sovereign remedy for every thing."

It was painful to Amanda to refuse; but scarcely able to stand, she was utterly unable to dance; had even her strength permitted her so to do, she could not have supported the idea of mingling in the set with Lord Mortimer, the glance of whose eye she never caught without a throb in her heart, which shook her whole frame.

One of the Miss Macqueens ran into the room, exclaiming, "Lord, Colin, what are you about? Lord Mortimer and my sister have already led off: do, pray, make haste and join us," and away she ran again.

"Let me no longer detain you," said Amanda, withdrawing her hand.—Young Macqueen, finding her inflexible, at length went off to seek a partner: he was as fond of dancing as his sisters, and feared he should not procure one; but luckily there were fewer gentlemen than ladies present, and a lady having stood up with his youngest sister, he easily prevailed on her to change her partner.

"We will go into the dancing-room, if you please," said Mrs. Macqueen to Amanda; "that will amuse, without fatiguing you."—Amanda would rather not have gone, but she could not say no, and they proceeded to it. Lord Mortimer had just concluded

cluded the dance, and was standing near the door, in a pensive attitude, Miss Macqueen being too much engrossed by something she was saying to the young lady next her, to mind him. The moment he perceived Amanda enter, he again approached his partner, and began chatting in a lively manner to her. Amanda and Mrs. Macqueen sat down together, and in listening to the conversation of that lady, Amanda found herself insensibly drawn from a too painful attention to surrounding objects. On expressing the pleasure which a mind of sensibility must feel on witnessing such family happiness as Mrs. Macqueen possessed, that lady said, she had reason indeed to be grateful to Heaven, and was truly so for her domestic comforts. "You see us now," she continued, "in our gayest season, because of my sons' company: but we are seldom dull; though summer is delightful, we never think the winter tedious: yet, though we love amusement, I assure you we dislike dissipation. The mornings are appropriated to business, and the evenings to recreation. All the work of the family goes through the hands of my daughters, and they wear nothing ornamental which they do not make themselves. Assisted by their good neighbours, they are enabled to diversify their amusements: the dance succeeds the concert, sometimes small plays, and now and then little dramatic entertainments. About two years ago, they performed the Winter's Tale: their poor father was not then in his present situation."—Mrs. Mac-

queen sighed, paused a minute, and then proceeded. —"Time must take something from us; but I should, and do bless, with heartfelt gratitude, the power which only, by its stealing hand, has made me feel the lot of human nature. Mr. Macqueen," continued she, "at the time I mentioned, was full of spirits, and performed the part of Autolicus: they made me take the character of the good Paulina. By thus mixing in the amusements of our children, we have added, to their love and reverence, perfect confidence and esteem; and find, when our presence is wanting, the diversion, let it be what it may, wants something to render it complete. They are now about acting the Gentle Shepherd: several rehearsals have already taken place in our great barn, which is the theatre. On these occasions, one of my sons leads the band, another paints the scenes, and Colin, your rejected partner, acts the part of prompter."—Here this conversation, so pleasing to Amanda and interesting to Mrs. Macqueen, was interrupted by a message from the drawing-room, to inform the latter the rubber was over, and a new set wanted to cut in.—"I will return as soon as possible," said Mrs. Macqueen, as she was quitting her seat. If Amanda had not dreaded the looks of Lady Martha almost as much as those of Lord Mortimer or Lady Araminta, she would have followed her to the drawing-room: as this was the case, she resolved on remaining in her present situation. It was some time ere she was observed by the young Macqueens:

at

at last Miss Macqueen came over to her. "I declare," said she, "you look so sad and solitary, I wish you could be prevailed on to dance; do try this, it is a very lively one, and take Flora for your partner, who, you see, has sat in a corner quite discomposed since she lost her partner, and by the next set, Colin will be disengaged."

Amanda declared she could not dance; and Miss Macqueen being called to her place at the instant, she was again left to herself. Miss Macqueen, however, continued to come and chat with her, whenever she could do so without losing any part of the dance. At last Lord Mortimer followed her. The eyes of Amanda were involuntarily bent to the ground, when she saw him approach.—"You are an absolute runaway," cried he to Miss Macqueen; "how do you suppose I will excuse your frequent desertions?"—"Why, Miss Donald is so lonely," said she.—"See," cried he with quickness, "your sister beckons you to her. Suffer me," taking her hand, "to lead you to her."

Amanda looked up as they moved from her, and saw Lord Mortimer's head half turned back; but the instant she perceived him, he averted it, and took no further notice of her. When the set was finished, Miss Macqueen returned to Amanda, and was followed by some of her brothers and sisters: some of the gentlemen also approached Amanda, and requested the honour of her hand; but she was steady in refusing all. Rich wines, sweetmeats, and warm

lemonade, were now handed about in profusion, and the strains of the violin were succeeded by those of the bagpipe, played by the family musician, venerable in his appearance, and habited in the ancient Highland dress. With as much satisfaction to himself as his Scotch auditors, he played a lively Scotch reel, which, in a moment, brought two of the Miss Macqueens and two gentlemen forward, and they continued the dance till politeness induced them to stop, that one might be begun in which the rest of the party could join. Dancing continued in this manner with little intermission; but whenever there was an interval, the young Macqueens paid every attention to Amanda; and on her expressing her admiration of the Scotch music, made it a point that she should mention some favourite airs, that they might be played for her; but those airs, the lively dances, the animated conversation, and the friendly attentions paid her, could not remove her dejection, and with truth they might have said, that

——"Nothing could a charm impart
To sooth the stranger's woe."

The entrance of Mrs. Macqueen was the signal for the dance being ended. She made the young people sit down to refresh themselves before supper, and apologized to Amanda for not returning to her; but said, Lady Martha Dormer had engaged her in a conversation she could not interrupt. At last they were summoned to supper, which, on Mr. Macqueen's account, was laid out in a room on the same floor:

floor: thither, without ceremony, whoever was next the door first proceeded. Mr. Macqueen was already seated at the table in his arm-chair, and Lady Martha Dormer on his right hand: the eldest son was deputed to do the honours of the foot of the table. The company was chequered, and Amanda found herself seated between Lord Mortimer and Mr. Colin Macqueen; and in conversing with the latter, Amanda sought to avoid noticing, or being noticed by Lord Mortimer; and his Lordship, by the particular attention which he paid Miss Macqueen, who sat on the other side, appeared actuated by the same wish. The sports of the morning had furnished the table with a variety of the choicest wild fowl, and the plenty and beauty of the confectionary denoted at once the hospitable spirit and elegant taste of the mistress of the feast. Gaiety presided at the board, and there was scarcely a tongue, except Amanda's, which did not utter some lively sally. The piper sat in the lobby, and if his strains were not melodious, they were at least cheerful.—In the course of supper, Lord Mortimer was compelled to follow the universal example, in drinking Amanda's health. Obliged to turn her looks to him, oh! how did her heart shrink at the glance, the expressive glance of his eye, as he pronounced Miss Donald! Unconscious whether she had noticed, in the usual manner, his distressing compliment, she abruptly turned to young Macqueen, and addressed some scarcely articulate question to him.

The supper things removed, the strains of the piper were silenced, and songs, toasts, and sentiments succeeded: old Mr. Macqueen set the example, by a favourite Scotch air, and then called upon his next neighbour. Between the songs, toasts were called for. At last it came to Lord Mortimer's turn. Amanda suddenly ceased speaking to young Macqueen: she saw the glass of Lord Mortimer filled, and in the next moment, heard the name of Lady Euphrasia Sutherland. A feeling like wounded pride stole into the soul of Amanda; she did not decline her head as before, and she felt a faint glow upon her cheek. The eyes of Lady Martha and Lady Araminta she thought directed to her with an expressive meaning. "They think," cried she, "to witness mortification and disappointment in my looks, but they shall not (if indeed they are capable of enjoying such a triumph) have it."—At length she was called upon for a song: she declined the call; but Mr. Macqueen declared, except assured she could not sing, she should not be excused. This assurance, without a breach of truth, she could not give: she did not wish to appear ungrateful to her kind entertainers, or unsocial in the midst of mirth, by refusing what she was told would be pleasing to them and their company; she also wished, from a sudden impulse of pride, to appear cheerful in those eyes she knew were attentively observing her; and therefore, after a little hesitation, consented to sing. The first song which occurred to her, was a little simple,

simple, but pathetic air, which her father used to delight in, and which Lord Mortimer more than once had heard from her; but indeed she could recollect no song which, at some time or other, she had not sung for him. The simple air she had chosen seemed perfectly adapted to her soft voice, whose modulations were inexpressibly affecting. She had proceeded through half the second verse, when her voice began to falter. The attention of the company became, if possible, more fixed; but it was a vain attention; no rich strain of melody repaid it, for the voice of the songstress had totally ceased. Mrs. Macqueen, with the delicacy of a susceptible mind, feared increasing her emotion by noticing it, and with a glance of her expressive eye, directed her company to silence. Amanda's eyes were bent to the ground: suddenly a glass of water was presented to her by a trembling hand, by the hand of Mortimer himself: she declined it with a motion of hers; and reviving a little, raised her head. Young Macqueen then gave her an entreating whisper to finish the song: she thought it would look like affectation to require farther solicitation, and faintly smiling, again began in strains of liquid melody, strains that seemed to breathe the very spirit of sensibility, and came over each attentive ear

> ——— "Like a sweet sound
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour."

The plaudits she received from her singing, gave

to her cheeks such a faint tinge of red, as is seen in the bosom of the wild rose. She was now authorized to call for a song; and, as if doomed to experience cause for agitation, Lord Mortimer was the person from whom, in the rotation of the table, she was to claim it. Thrice she was requested to do this, ere she could obey: at last she raised her eyes to his face, which was now turned towards her, and she saw in it a confusion equal to that she herself had trembled under: pale and red by turns, he appeared to her to wait, in painful agitation, for the sound of her voice: her lips moved, but she could not articulate a word. Lord Mortimer bowed, as if he had heard what they would have said, and then turning abruptly to Miss Macqueen, began speaking to her.—"Come, come, my Lord," said Mr. Macqueen, "we must not be put off in this manner."

Lord Mortimer laughed, and attempted to rally the old gentleman, but he seemed unequal to the attempt; for, with a sudden seriousness, he declared his inability of complying with the present demand: all farther solicitation on the subject was immediately dropped.—In the round of toasts, they forgot not to call upon Amanda for one. If she had listened attentively when Lord Mortimer was about giving one, no less attentively did he now listen to her. She hesitated a moment, and then gave Sir Charles Bingley. After the toast passed—"Sir Charles Bingley!" repeated Miss Macqueen, leaning forward, and speaking across Lord Mortimer: "oh, I recollect

I recollect him very well: his regiment was quartered, about two years ago, at a little fort some distance from this; and I remember his coming with a shooting-party to the mountains, and sleeping one night here: we had a delightful dance that evening, and all thought him a charming young man. Pray, are you well acquainted with him?"—"Yes—no," replied Amanda.—"Ah! I believe you are a sly girl," cried Miss Macqueen, laughing. "Pray, my Lord, does not that blush declare Miss Donald guilty?"—"We are not always to judge from the countenance," said he, darting a penetrating, yet quickly-withdrawn glance at Amanda: "experience," continued he, "daily proves how little dependance is to be placed on it."—Amanda turned hastily away, and pretended, by speaking to young Macqueen, not to notice a speech she knew directly pointed at her; for often had Lord Mortimer declared, that, in the lineaments of the human face divine, each passion of the soul might be well traced.—Miss Macqueen laughed, and said she always judged of the countenance, and that her likings and dislikings were always the effects of first sight.

The company broke up soon after this, and much earlier than their usual hour, on account of the travellers. All but those then immediately belonging to the family having departed, some maids of the house appeared, to shew the ladies to their respective chambers. Ladies Martha and Araminta retired first: Amanda was following them, when Mrs. Macqueen

detained her, to try and prevail on her to stay two or three days along with them. The Miss Macqueens joined their mother; but Amanda assured them she could not comply with their request, though she felt with gratitude its friendly warmth. Old Mr. Macqueen had had his chair turned to the fire, and his sons and Lord Mortimer were surrounding it.—"Well, well," said he, calling Amanda to him, and taking her hand, "if you will not stay with us now, remember, on your return, we shall lay an embargo on you: in the meantime, I shall not lose the privilege which my being an old married man gives me:" so saying, he gently pulled Amanda to him, and kissed her cheek. She could only smile at his innocent freedom; but she attempted to withdraw her hand to retire.—"Now," said Mr. Macqueen, still detaining it, "are all these young men half mad with envy."—The young Macqueens joined in their father's gallantry, and not a tongue was silent except Lord Mortimer's: his head rested on his hand, and the cornice of the chimney supported his arm; his hair, from which the dancing had almost shaken all the powder, hung negligently about his face, and added to its paleness and sudden dejection. One of the young Macqueens turning from his brothers, who were yet continuing their mirth with their father, addressed some question to his Lordship, but received no answer. Again he repeated it. Lord Mortimer then suddenly started, as if from a profound reverie, and apologized for his absence.

"Ah,

"Ah, ah, my Lord," exclaimed old Mr. Macqueen jocosely, "we may all guess where your Lordship was then travelling in idea—a little beyond the mountains, I fancy; aye, we all know where your heart and your treasure now lie."—"Do you?" said Lord Mortimer, with a tone of deep dejection and a heavy sigh, with an air also which seemed to declare him scarcely conscious of what he said: he recollected himself, however, at the instant, and began rallying himself, as the surest means of preventing others doing so.

The scene was too painful to Amanda; she hastily withdrew her hand, and faintly wishing the party a good-night, went out to the maid, who was waiting for her in the lobby, and was conducted to her room. She dismissed the servant at the door, and throwing herself into a chair, availed herself of solitude to give vent to the tears whose painful suppression had so long tortured her heart. She had not sat long in this situation, when she heard a gentle tap at the door: she started, and believing it to be one of the Miss Macqueens, hastily wiped away her tears, and opened the door. A female stranger appeared at it, who, curtseying respectfully, said Lady Martha Dormer, her Lady, desired to see Miss Donald for a few minutes, if not inconvenient to her.—"See me!" repeated Amanda, with the utmost surprise: "is it possible?" She suddenly checked herself, and said she would attend her Ladyship immediately: she accordingly followed the maid; a variety of strange

strange ideas crowded upon her mind. Her conductress retired, as she shut the door of the room into which she shewed Amanda: it was a small antichamber, adjoining the apartment Lady Martha was to lie in. Here, with increasing surprise, she beheld Lord Mortimer pacing the room in an agitated manner. His back was to the door as she entered; but he turned round with quickness, approached, looked on her a few moments, then striking his hand suddenly against his forehead, turned from her with an air of distraction.—Lady Martha, who was sitting at the head of the room, and only bowed as Amanda entered it, motioned for her to take a chair—a motion Amanda gladly obeyed, for her trembling limbs could scarcely support her. All were silent for a few minutes: Lady Martha then spoke in a grave voice—"I should not, Madam, have taken the liberty of sending for you at this hour, but that I believe so favourable an opportunity would not again have occurred, of speaking to you on a subject particularly interesting to me—an opportunity which has so unexpectedly saved me the trouble of trying to find you out, and the necessity of writing to you."—Lady Martha paused, and her silence was not interrupted by Amanda.—"Last summer," continued Lady Martha; again she paused; the throbbings of Amanda's heart became more violent: "last summer," said she again, "there were some little gifts presented to you by Lord Mortimer; from the events which followed their acceptance, I must presume they

they are valueless to you; from the events about taking place, they are of importance elsewhere."—She ceased, but Amanda could make no reply.—"You cannot be ignorant," said Lady Martha, with something of severity in her accent, as if offended by the silence of Amanda, "you cannot be ignorant, I suppose, that it is the picture and ring I allude to. The latter, from being a family one of particular value, I always destined for the wife of Lord Mortimer: I therefore claim it in my own name: the picture I have his Lordship's approbation and authority to demand; and to convince you I have, if indeed such a conviction be necessary, have prevailed on him to be present at this conversation."—"No, Madam, such a conviction was not necessary," cried Amanda: "I should——" she could utter no more at the moment, yet tried to suppress the agonizing feelings that tumultuously heaved her bosom.—"If not convenient to restore them immediately," said Lady Martha, "I will give you a direction where they may be left in London, to which place Mrs. Macqueen has informed me you are going."—"It is perfectly convenient now to restore them, Madam," replied Amanda, with a voice perfectly recovered, animated with conscious innocence and offended pride, which always gave her strength: "I shall return," continued she, moving to the door, "with them immediately to your Ladyship."

The picture was suspended from her neck, and the ring, in its case, lay in her pocket; but, by the manner

manner in which they had been asked, or rather demanded from her, she felt, amidst the anguish of her soul, a sudden emotion of pleasure that she could directly give them back: yet when, in her own room, she hastily untied the picture from her neck, pulled the black ribbon from it, and laid it in its case, her grief overcame every other feeling, and a shower of tears fell from her: "Oh, Mortimer! dear Mortimer!" she sighed, "must I part even with this little shadow? must I retain no vestige of happier hours? Yet why, why should I wish to retain it, when the original will so soon be another's? Yes, if I behold Mortimer again, it will be as the husband of Lady Euphrasia."

She recollected she was staying beyond the expected time, and wiped away her tears; yet still she lingered a few minutes in the chamber, to try to calm her agitation. She called her pride to her aid, it inspired her with fortitude, and she proceeded to Lady Martha, determined that lady should see nothing in her manner which she could possibly construe into weakness or meanness. Never did she appear more interesting than at the moment she re-entered the apartment: the passion she had called to her aid, gave a bright glow to her cheeks; and the traces of the tears she had been shedding, appeared upon those glowing cheeks like dew on the silken leaves of the rose, ere the sunbeams of the morning has exhaled it: those tears left a humid lustre on her eyes, even more interesting than their wonted brilliancy.

Her

Her hair hung in rich and unrestrained luxuriance on her shoulders, for she had thrown off her hat on first going to her chamber, and gave to the beauty of her face, and the elegance of her form, a complete finishing. "Here, Madam, is the ring," cried she, presenting it to Lady Martha; "and here is the picture," she would have added, but her voice faltered, and a tear started from her eye. Determined to conceal, if possible, her feelings, she hastily dashed away the pearly fugitive.—Lady Martha was again extending her hand, when Lord Mortimer suddenly started from a couch on which he had thrown himself, and snatching the picture from the trembling hand that held it, pulled it from its case, and flinging it on the floor, trampled it beneath his feet: "Thus perish," exclaimed he, "every memento of my attachment to Amanda!—Oh, wretched, wretched girl!" cried he, suddenly grasping her hand, and as suddenly relinquishing it; "oh, wretched, wretched girl! you have undone yourself and me!" He turned abruptly away, and instantly quitted the room.

Shocked by his words, and terrified by his manner, Amanda had just power to gain a chair. Lady Martha seemed also thunderstruck; but, from the musing attitude in which she stood, the deep, convulsive, suffocating sobs of Amanda soon called her. She went to her, and finding her unable to help herself, loosened her cravat, bathed her temples with lavender, and gave her water to drink. Those attentions,

tentions, and the tears she shed, revived Amanda; she raised herself in her chair, on which she had fallen back, but was yet too much agitated to stand. —"Poor unhappy young creature!" said Lady Martha, "I pity you from my soul! Ah, if your mind resembled your person, what a perfect creature had you been! how happy had then been my poor Mortimer!"

Now, now was the test, the shining test of Amanda's virtue, agonized by knowing she had lost the good opinion of those whom she loved with such ardour, and esteemed with such reverence: she knew, by a few words, she could explain the appearances which had deprived her of his good opinion, and fully regain it—regain, by a few words, the love, the esteem, of her valued, her inestimable Mortimer—the affection, the protection of his amiable aunt and sister. She leaned her head upon her hand; the weight in her bosom became less oppressive; she raised her head: "Of my innocence I can give such proofs," cried she: her lips closed, a mortal paleness overspread her face, the sound of suicide seemed piercing through her ear; she trembled: the solemn, the dreadful declaration Lord Cherbury had made of not surviving the disclosure of his secret, her promise of inviolably keeping it, both rushed upon her mind; she beheld herself on the very verge of a tremendous precipice, and about plunging herself and a fellow-creature into it; from whence, at the tribunal of her God, she would have to answer

for

for accelerating the death of that fellow-creature: "And is it by a breach of faith," she asked herself, "I hope to be re-established in the opinion of Lord Mortimer and his relations? Ah, mistaken idea! and how great is the delusion passion spreads before our eyes, even if their esteem could be thus regained! Oh, what were that, or what the esteem, the plaudits of the world, if those of my own heart were gone for ever! Oh, never," cried she still to herself, and raising her eyes to Heaven; "oh, never may the pang of self-reproach be added to those which now oppress me!"—Her heart, at the moment, formed a solemn vow never, by any wilful act, to merit such a pang: "And oh, my God," she cried, "forgive thy weak creature, who, assailed by strong temptation, thought, for a moment, of wandering from the path of truth and integrity, which can alone conduct her to the region where peace and immortal glory will be hers!"

Amanda, amidst her powerful emotions, forgot she was observed, except by that Being to whom she applied for pardon and future strength. Lady Martha had been a silent spectator of her emotions, and thinking as she did of Amanda, could only hope they proceeded from contrition for her past conduct, forcibly awakened by reflecting on the deprivations it had caused her. When she again saw Amanda able to pay attention, she addressed her: "I said I was sorry for witnessing your distress; I shall not repeat the expression, thinking as I now do; I hope that

that it is occasioned by regret for past errors: the tears of repentance wash away the stains of guilt, and that heart must indeed be callous, which the sigh of remorse will not melt to pity."—Amanda turned her eyes with earnestness on Lady Martha as she spoke, and her cheeks were again tinged with a faint glow.—"Perhaps I speak too plainly," cried Lady Martha, witnessing this glow, and imputing it to resentment; "but I have ever liked the undisguised language of sincerity. It gave me pleasure," she continued, "to hear you had been in employment at Mrs. Duncan's; but that pleasure was destroyed, by hearing you were going to London, though to seek your brother, Mrs. Duncan has informed Mrs. Macqueen. If this be indeed the motive, there are means of inquiring, without taking so imprudent a step."—"Imprudent!" repeated Amanda involuntarily.—"Yes," cried Lady Martha; "a journey so long, without a protector, to a young, I must add a lovely woman, teems with danger, from which a mind of delicacy would shrink appalled. If indeed you go to seek your brother, and he regards you as he should, he would rather have you neglect him (though that you need not have done by staying with Mrs. Duncan) than run into the way of insults. No emergency in life should lead us to do an improper thing: as trying to produce good by evil is impious, so trying to produce pleasure by imprudence is folly; they are trials, however flatteringly they may commence, which are sure to end in sorrow and disappointment.

disappointment. You will," continued Lady Martha, " if indeed anxious to escape from any further censure than what has already fallen upon you, return to Mrs. Duncan, when I inform you (if indeed you are already ignorant of it) that Colonel Belgrave passed this road about a month ago, in his way from a remote part of Scotland to London, where he now is."—" I cannot help," said Amanda, " the misconstructions which may be put on my actions; I can only support myself under the pain they inflict, by conscious rectitude. I am shocked indeed at the surmises entertained about me, and a wretch whom my soul abhorred, from the moment it knew his real principles."—" If," said Lady Martha, " your journey is really not prompted by the intention of seeing your brother, you heighten every other by duplicity."—" You are severe, Madam," exclaimed Amanda, in whose soul the pride of injured innocence was again reviving.—" If I probe the wound," cried Lady Martha, " I would also wish to heal it: it is the wish I feel of saving a young creature from further error, of serving a being once so valued by him who possesses my first regard, that makes me speak as I now do. Return to Mrs. Duncan; prove, in one instance at least, you do not deserve suspicion: she is your friend; and in your situation, a friend is too precious a treasure to run the risk of losing it: with her, as she lives retired, there will be little danger of your history, or real name, being discovered, which I am sorry you dropped, let your motive

motive for doing so be what it may, for the detection of one deception makes us suspect every other. Return, I repeat, to Mrs. Duncan's; and if you want any inquiries made about your brother, dictate them, and I will take care they shall be made, and that you shall know their result."

Had Amanda's motive for a journey to London been only to seek her brother, she would gladly have accepted this offer; thus avoiding the imputation of travelling after Belgrave, or of going to join him; the hazard of encountering him in London, and the dangers of so long a journey: but the affair of the will required expedition, and her own immediate presence—an affair, the injunction of Lady Dunreath had prohibited her disclosing to any one who could not immediately forward it, and which, if such an injunction never existed, she could not with propriety have divulged to Lady Martha, who was so soon to be connected with a family so materially concerned in it, and in whose favour, on account of her nephew's connexion with them, it was probable she might be biassed. Amanda hoped and believed, that, in a place so large as London, and with her assumed name (which she now resolved not to drop till in a more secure situation), she should escape Belgrave. As to meeting him on the road, she had not the smallest apprehensions concerning that, naturally concluding, that he never would have taken so long a journey as he had lately done, if he could have staid but a few weeks away. Time, she trusted, would

would prove the falsity of the inference, which, she already was informed, would be drawn from her persevering in her journey. She told Lady Martha that she thanked her for her kind offer, but must decline it, as the line of conduct she had marked out for herself rendered it unnecessary, whose innocence would yet be justified, she added. Lady Martha shook her head: the consciousness of having excited suspicions which she could not justify, had indeed given to the looks of Amanda a confusion when she spoke, which confirmed them in Lady Martha's breast. "I am sorry for your determination," said she; "but, notwithstanding it is so contrary to my ideas of what is right, I cannot let you depart without telling you, that should you, at any time, want or require services which you would, or could not ask from strangers, or perhaps expect them to perform, acquaint me, and command mine: yet, in doing justice to my own feelings, I must not do injustice to the noble ones of Lord Mortimer: it is by his desire, as well as my own inclination, I now speak to you in this manner; though past events, and the situation he is about entering into, must for ever preclude his personal interference in your affairs: he could never hear the daughter of Captain Fitzalan suffered inconveniency of any kind, without wishing, without having her indeed, if possible, extricated from it."—"Oh, Madam," cried Amanda, unable to repress her gushing tears, "I am already well acquainted with the noble feelings of Lord

Lord Mortimer, already oppressed with a weight of obligations!"—Lady Martha was affected by her energy; her eyes grew humid, and her voice softened. "Error in you will be more inexcusable than in others," cried Lady Martha, "because, like too many unhappy creatures, you cannot plead the desertion of all the world. To regret past errors, be they what they may, is to ensure my assistance and protection, if both, or either, are at any time required by you: was I even gone, I should take care to leave a substitute behind me, who should fulfil my intentions towards you, and, by so doing, at once sooth and gratify the feelings of Lord Mortimer."—"I thank you, Madam," cried Amanda, rising from her chair, and, as she wiped away her tears, summoning all her fortitude to her aid, "for the interest you express about me: the time may yet come, perhaps, when I shall prove I never was unworthy of exciting it—when the notice now offered from compassion, may be tendered from esteem: then," continued Amanda, who could not forbear this justice to herself, "the pity of Lady Martha Dormer will not humble, but exalt me, because then I shall know that it proceeds from that generous sympathy which one virtuous mind feels for another in distress."—She moved to the door.—"How lamentable," said Lady Martha, "to have such talents misapplied!"—"Ah, Madam," cried Amanda, stopping, and turning mournfully to her, "I find you are inflexible."—Lady Martha shook her head, and

Amanda

Amanda had laid her hand upon the lock, when Lady Martha said suddenly, "There were letters passed between you and Lord Mortimer."—Amanda bowed.—"They had better be mutually returned," said Lady Martha: "do you seal up his, and send them to Lord Cherbury's house in London, directed to me, and I will pledge myself to have yours returned."—"You shall be obeyed, Madam," replied Amanda, in a low broken voice, after the pause of a moment.—Lady Martha then said, she would no longer encroach upon her rest, and she retired.

In her chamber, the feelings she had so long, so painfully tried to suppress, broke forth without again meeting opposition—the pride which had given her transient animation was no more; for, as past circumstances arose to recollection, she could not wonder at her being condemned from them. She no longer accused Lady Martha, in her mind, of severity—no longer felt offended with her: but, oh, Mortimer! the bitter tears she shed fell not for herself alone—she wept to think thy destiny, though more prosperous, was not less unhappy than her own; for in thy broken accents, thy altered looks, she perceived a passion as strong and sincere as ever for her; and well she knew Lady Euphrasia not calculated to sooth a sad heart, or steal an image from it which corroded its felicity. Rest, after the incidents of the evening, was not to be thought of; but nature was exhausted, and insensibly Amanda sunk upon the bed in a deep sleep—so insensibly,

that when she awoke, which was not till the morning was pretty far advanced, she felt surprised at her situation: she felt cold and unrefreshed, from having lain in her clothes all night; and when she went to adjust her dress at the glass, was surprised at the pallidness of her looks. Anxious to escape a second painful meeting, she went to the window to see if the chaise was come, but was disappointed, on finding that she had slept at the back of the house. She heard no noise; and concluding the family had not yet risen after the amusements of the preceding night, sat down by the window, which looked into a spacious garden, above which rose romantic hills, that formed a screen for some young and beautiful plantations that lay between them and the garden: but neither the misty tops of the hills, the varied tints which autumn spread over the plantations, nor the neat appearance of the garden, had power to amuse the imagination of Amanda: her patience was exhausted, after sitting some time; and going to the door, she softly opened it, to try if she could hear any one stirring. She had not stood long, when the sound of footsteps and voices rose from below. She instantly quitted her room, and descended the stairs into a small hall, across which was a folding-door; this she gently opened, and found it divided the hall she stood in from one that was spacious and lofty, and which her passing through, the preceding night, before it was lighted up, had prevented her taking notice of. Here, at a long table, were the men-

servants

servants belonging to the family and the guests, assembled at breakfast—the piper at the head, like the king of the feast. Amanda stepped back the moment she perceived them, well knowing Lord Mortimer's servants would recollect her; and was ascending the stairs to her room, to ring for one of the maids, when a servant hastily followed her, and said the family were already in the breakfast-room; at the same moment Mr. Colin Macqueen came from a parlour which opened into the little hall, and paying Amanda, in a lively and affectionate manner, the compliments of the morning, he led her to the parlour, where not only all the family and guests who had lain in the house, but several gentlemen who had been with them the preceding night, were assembled. Dr. Johnson has already celebrated a Scotch breakfast; nor was the one at which Mrs. Macqueen and her fair daughters presided, inferior to any he had seen: besides chocolate, tea, and coffee, with the usual appendages, there were rich cakes, choice sweatmeats, and a variety of cold pastry, with ham and chickens, to which several of the gentlemen did honour. The dishes were ornamented with sweet herbs and wild flowers, gathered about the feet of the mountains and in the valley; and by every guest was placed a fine bouquet from the green-house, with little French mottoes on love and friendship about them, which being opened and read, added to the mirth of the company.

"I was just going to send one of the girls for

you," said Mrs. Macqueen, when Amanda had taken a place at the table, "and would have done so before, but wished you to get as much rest as possible, after your fatiguing journey."—"I assure you, Madam," said Amanda, "I have been up this long time, expecting every moment a summons to the chaise."—"I took care of that last night," said Mrs. Macqueen; "for I was determined you should not depart, at least without breakfasting."—Amanda was seated between Mr. Colin Macqueen and his elder sister, and sought, by conversing with the former (for the latter was too much engrossed by the general gaiety, to pay much attention to any one), to avoid the looks she dreaded to see; yet the sound of Lord Mortimer's voice affected her as much almost as his looks.

"Pray, Lady Martha," said the second Miss Macqueen, a lively, thoughtless girl, "will your Ladyship be so good as to guarantee a promise Lord Mortimer has just made me, or rather that I have extorted from him, which is the cause of this application?"—"You must first, my dear," answered Lady Martha, "let me know what the promise is."—"Why, gloves and bridal-favours; but most unwillingly granted, I can assure your Ladyship."—Amanda was obliged to set down the cup she was raising to her lips, and a glance stole involuntarily from her towards Lord Mortimer—a glance instantly withdrawn, when she saw his eyes in the same direction.—"I declare," continued Miss Phœbe Macqueen,

queen, "I should do the favour all due honour."—"I am sure," cried Lord Mortimer, attempting to speak cheerfully, "your acceptance of it would do honour to the presenter."—"And your Lordship may be sure too," said one of her brothers, "it is a favour she would wish, with all her heart, to have an opportunity of returning."—"Oh, in that she would not be singular," said a gentleman.—"What do you think, Miss Donald?" cried Colin Macqueen, turning to Amanda? "do you imagine she would not?"—Amanda could scarcely speak: she tried, however, to hide her agitation: and forcing a faint smile, with a voice nearly as faint, said that was not a fair question. The Miss Macqueens took upon themselves to answer it; and Amanda, through their means, was relieved from farther embarrassment.

Breakfast over, Amanda was anxious to depart, and yet wanted courage to be the first to move; a charm seemed to bind her to the spot where, for the last time, she should behold Lord Mortimer, at least the last time she ever expected to see him unmarried. Her dread of being late on the road (and she heard the destined stage for the night was at a great distance), at last conquered her reluctance to move, and she said to Mr. Colin Macqueen, it was time for her to go. At that moment Lord Mortimer rose, and proposed to the young Macqueens going with them to see the new plantations behind the house, which old Mr. Macqueen had expressed a desire his Lordship should give his opinion of. All

the young gentlemen, as well as the Macqueens, Colin excepted, attended his Lordship; nor did they depart without wishing Amanda a pleasant journey.

Silent and sad she continued in her chair for some minutes after they quitted the room, forgetful of her situation, till the loud laugh of the Miss Macqueens restored her to a recollection of it. She blushed, and rising hastily, was proceeding to pay her farewell compliments, when Mrs. Macqueen rising, drew her to the window, and, in a low voice, repeated her request for Amanda's company a few days. This Amanda again declined, but gratefully expressed her thanks for it, and the hospitality she had experienced. Mrs. Macqueen said, on her return to Scotland, she hoped to be more successful; she also added, that some of her boys and girls would gladly have accompanied Amanda a few miles on her way, had not they all agreed, ere her arrival, to escort Lord Mortimer's party to an inn at no great distance, and take an early dinner with them. She should write that day, she said, to Mrs. Duncan, and thank her for having introduced to her family a person whose acquaintance was an acquisition.

Amanda having received the affectionate adieus of this amiable woman and her daughters, curtsied, though with downcast looks, to Lady Martha and Lady Araminta, who returned her salutation with coolness. Followed by two of the Miss Macqueens, she hurried through the hall, from which the servants and the breakfast-things were already removed: but how

how was she distressed, when the first object she saw outside the door was Lord Mortimer, by whom stood Colin Macqueen, who had left the parlour to see if the chaise was ready, and one of his brothers! Hastily would she have stepped forward to the chaise, had not the gallantry of the young men impeded her way: they expressed sorrow at her not staying longer among them, and hopes, on her return, she would.

"Pray, my Lord," cried the Miss Macqueens, while her brothers were thus addressing Amanda; "pray, my Lord," almost in the same breath, "what have you done with the gentlemen?"—"You should ask your brother," he replied; "he has locked them up in the plantation."

A frolic was at all times pleasant to the light-hearted Macqueens, and, to enjoy the present one, off they ran directly, followed by their brothers, all calling, as they ran, to Amanda, not to stir till they came back, which would be in a few minutes; but Amanda, from the awkward, the agitating situation in which they had left her, would instantly have relieved herself, could she have made the postillion hear her; but, as if enjoying the race, he had gone to some distance to view it, and none of the servants of the house were near. Conscious of her own emotions, she feared betraying them, and stepped a few yards from the door, pretending to be engrossed by the Macqueens. A heavy sigh suddenly pierced her ears: "Amanda!" in the next moment, said a voice,

to which her heart vibrated. She turned with involuntary quickness, and saw Lord Mortimer close by her.—"Amanda!" he repeated; then, suddenly clasping his hands together, exclaimed, with an agonized expression, while he turned abruptly from her, "Gracious Heaven, what a situation! Amanda," said he, again looking at her, "the scene which happened last night was distressing: I am now sorry, on your account, that it took place. Notwithstanding past events, I bear you no ill-will: the knowledge of your uneasiness would give me pain: from my heart, I forgive you all that you have caused, that you have entailed upon me. At this moment I could take you to my arms, and weep over you, like the fond mother over the lost darling of her hopes, tears of pity and forgiveness."—Amanda, unutterably affected, covered her face, to hide the tears which bedewed it.—"Let me have the pleasure of hearing," continued Lord Mortimer, "that you forgive the uneasiness and pain I might have occasioned you last night."—"Forgive!" repeated Amanda; "oh, my Lord!" and her voice sunk in the sobs which heaved her bosom.—"Could I think you were, you would be happy—" Lord Mortimer stopped, overcome by strong emotions.—"Happy!" repeated Amanda; "oh! never, never!" continued she, raising her streaming eyes to heaven; "oh! never, never, in this world!"

At this moment the Macqueens were not only heard, but seen running back, followed by the gentlemen,

tlemen, whom they had been prevailed on to liberate. Shocked at the idea of being seen in such a situation, Amanda would have called the postillion, but he was too far off to hear her weak voice, had she even then been able to exert that voice: she looked towards him, however, with an expression which denoted the feelings of her soul. Lord Mortimer, sensible of those feelings, hastily pulled open the door of the chaise, and taking the cold and trembling hand of Amanda with one equally cold and trembling, assisted her into the chaise; then pressing the hand he held between both his, he suddenly let it drop from him, and closing the door, without again looking at Amanda, called to the driver, who instantly obeyed the call, and had mounted ere the Macqueens arrived. Oh! what a contrast did their looks, blooming with health and exercise, their gaiety, their protected situation, form to the wan, dejected, desolate Amanda! With looks of surprise they were going up to the chaise, when Lord Mortimer, still standing by it, and anxious to save his unhappy, lost Amanda, the pain of being noticed in such agitation, gave the man a signal to drive off, which was instantly obeyed.

Thus did Amanda leave the mansion of the Macqueens, where sorrow had scarcely ever before entered without meeting alleviation—a mansion where the stranger, the wayfaring man, and the needy, were sure of a welcome, cordial as benevolence and hospitality themselves could give; and where happiness,

as pure as in this sublunary state can be experienced, was enjoyed. As she drove from the door, she saw the splendid equipages of Lord Mortimer and Lady Martha driving to it: she turned from them with a sigh, at reflecting they would soon grace the bridal pomp of Lady Euphrasia. She pursued the remainder of her journey, without meeting any thing worthy of relation. It was in the evening she reached London. The moment she stopped at the hotel, she sent for a carriage, and proceeded in it to Mrs. Connel's, in Bond-street.

CHAP. III.

Dissembling Hope, her cloudy front she clears,
And a false vigour in her eyes appears. DRYDEN.

She alighted from the carriage when it stopped at the door, and entered the shop, where, to her inexpressible satisfaction, the first object she beheld was Miss Rushbrook sitting pensively at one of the counters. The moment she saw Amanda, she recollected her; and starting up, exclaimed, as she took her hand, "Ah, dear Madam, this is indeed a joyful surprise! Ah, how often have I wished to meet you again, to express my gratitude!"

The affectionate reception she met, and the unexpected

pected sight of Miss Rushbrook, seemed to promise Amanda that her wishes relative to Rushbrook would not only be accelerated, but crowned with success. She returned the fervent pressure of Miss Rushbrook's hand, and inquired after her parents. The inquiry appeared distressing, and she was answered with hesitation, that they were indifferent. The evident embarrassment her question excited, prevented her renewing it at this time.—The mistress of the house was not present, and Amanda requested, if she was within, she might see her directly. Miss Rushbrook immediately stepped to a parlour behind the shop, and almost instantly returned, followed by the lady herself, who was a little fat Irishwoman, past her prime, but not past her relish for the good things of this life. "Dear Madam," said she, curtseying to Amanda, "you are very welcome: I protest I am very glad to see you, though I never had that pleasure but once before: but it is no wonder I should be so, for I have heard your praises every day since, I am sure, from that young lady," looking at Miss Rushbrook.—Amanda bowed; but her heart was too full of the purpose of this visit, to allow her to speak about any thing else. She was just come from the country, she told Mrs. Connel, where (she sighed as she spoke) she had left her friends; and, being unwilling to go amongst total strangers, she had come to her house, in hopes of being able to procure lodgings in it."—"Dear Ma'am," said Mrs. Connel, "I protest I should

have been happy to have accommodated you; but, at present, my house is quite full."

The disappointment this speech gave Amanda rendered her silent for a moment; and she was then going to ask Mrs. Connel if she could recommend her to a lodging, when she perceived Miss Rushbrook whispering her.—"Why, Madam," cried the former, who, by a nod of her head, seemed to approve of what the latter had been saying, "since you dislike so much going amongst strangers, which indeed shews your prudence, considering what queer kind of people are in the world, Miss Emily says, that, if you condescend to accept a part of her little bed till you can settle yourself more comfortably in town, you shall be extremely welcome to it; and I can assure you, Ma'am, I shall do every thing in my power to render my house agreeable to you."—"Oh! most joyfully, most thankfully, do I accept the offer!" said Amanda, whose heart had sunk at the idea of going among strangers: "any place," she continued, speaking in the fulness of that agitated heart, "beneath so reputable a roof, would be an asylum of comfort I should prefer to a palace, if utterly unacquainted with the people who inhabited it."—Her trunk was now brought in, and the carriage discharged.—"I suppose, Ma'am," said Mrs. Connel, looking at the trunk, on which her assumed name was marked, "you are Scotch, by your name; though indeed you have not much of the accent about you."—"I declare," cried Emily, also looking at

at it, "till this moment I was ignorant of your name."

Amanda was pleased to hear this, and resolved not to disclose her real one, except convinced Rushbrook would interest himself in her affairs. She was conducted into the parlour, which was neatly furnished, and opened into the shop by a glass door. Mrs. Connel stirred a declining fire into a cheerful blaze, and desired to know if Amanda would chuse any thing for dinner. "Speak the word only, my dear," said she, "and I think I can procure you a cold bone in the house. If you had come two hours sooner, I could have given you a bit of nice veal for your dinner."—Amanda assured her she did not wish to take any thing till tea-time.—"Well, well," cried Mrs. Connel, "you shall have a snug cup of tea by-and-by, and a hot muffin with it. I am very fond of tea myself; though poor Mr. Connel, who is dead and gone, used often and often to say, I that was so nervous should never touch tea: 'But, Biddy,' he would say, and he would laugh so, poor dear man, 'you and all your sex are like your mother Eve, unable to resist temptation."

Emily retired soon after Amanda entered, but returned, in a few minutes, with a hat and cloak on, and said, nothing but a visit she must pay her parents, should have induced her to forego, for the first evening at least, the pleasure of Miss Donald's society.—Amanda thanked her for her politeness; but assured her, if considered as a restraint, she should

should be unhappy.—" I assure you," said Mrs. Connel, as Emily departed, "she is very fond of you."—" I am happy to hear it," replied Amanda, " for I think her a most amiable girl."—" Indeed she is," cried the other; " all the fault I find with her is, being too grave for her time of life. Poor thing, one cannot wonder at that, however, considering the situation of her parents."—" I hope," interrupted Amanda, " it is not so bad as it was."—" Bad! Lord, it cannot be worse! The poor Captain has been in gaol above a year."—" I am sorry," said Amanda, " to hear this. Has any application been made to Lady Greystock since his confinement?"—" To Lady Greystock! Why, Lord! one might as well apply to one of the wild beasts in the Tower! Ah, poor gentleman! if he was never to get nothing but what she gave him, I believe he would not long be a trouble to any one. It is now about fourteen years since my acquaintance with him first commenced. My poor husband, that is no more, and I, kept a shop in Dublin, where the Captain's regiment was quartered; and he being only a lieutenant, had not room enough for his family in the barracks, so he took lodgings at our house, where Mrs. Rushbrook lay-in; and I being with her now and then during her confinement, a kind of friendship grew amongst us. They had not left us long to go to America, when a relation of my husband's, who owned this house and shop, having lost his wife, and being lonesome, without either chick

or

or child, invited us to come and live with him; promising us, if we did, to settle us in his business, and leave us every thing he had. Well, such offers do not come every day; so, to be sure, we took him at his word: and here we had not been long, when the poor man bade adieu to all mortal care, and was soon followed by Mr. Connel. Well, to be sure, I was sad and solitary enough; but when I thought how irreligious it was to break one's heart with grief, I plucked up my spirits, and began to hold up my head again. So, to make a short story of a long one, about six years ago, Mrs. Rushbrook and Miss Emily came one day into the shop to buy something, little thinking they should see an old friend: it was, to be sure, a meeting of joy and sorrow, as one may say—we told all our griefs to each other; and I found things were very bad with the poor Captain. Indeed I have a great regard for him and his family; and when he was confined, I took Emily home, as an assistant in my business: the money she earned was to go to her parents, and I agreed to give her her clothes gratis; but that would have gone a little way in feeding so many mouths, had I not procured plain-work for Mrs. Rushbrook and her daughters. Emily is a very good girl indeed, and it is to see her parents she is now gone.—But, while I am gabbling away, I am sure the kettle is boiling:" so saying, she started up, and ringing the bell, took the tea-things from a beaufet where they were kept. The maid having obeyed the well-known summons, then retired;

retired; and as soon as the tea was made, and the muffins buttered, Mrs. Connel made Amanda draw her chair close to the table, that she might, as she said, look snug, and drink her tea comfortably. "I assure you, Ma'am," cried she, "it was a lucky hour for Miss Emily when she entered my house." —"I have no doubt of that," said Amanda.— "You must know, Madam," proceeded Mrs. Connel, "about a month ago, a gentleman came to lodge with me, who, I soon found, was making speeches to Miss Emily: he was one of those wild-looking sparks, who, like Ranger in the play, look as if they would be popping through every one's doors and windows, and playing such tricks as made poor Mr. Strickland so jealous of his wife. Well, I took my gentleman to task one day unawares: 'So, Mr. Sipthorpe,' says I, 'I am told you have cast a sheep's eye upon one of my girls: but I must tell you, she is a girl of virtue and family: so, if you do not mean to deal honourably with her, you must either decamp from this, or speak to her no more.'—Upon this he made me a speech as long as a member of parliament's upon a new tax. 'Lord, Mr. Sipthorpe,' said I, 'there is no occasion for all this oratory; a few words will settle the business between us.'—Well, this was coming close to the point, you will say; and he told me then, he always meant to deal honourably by Miss Emily, and told me all about his circumstances; and I found he had a fine fortune, which indeed I partly guessed before, from

from the appearance he made; and he said he would not only marry Miss Emily, but take her parent out of prison, and provide for the whole family. Well, now comes the provoking part of my story:—A young clergyman had been kind, at the beginning of their distress, to them; and he and Miss Emily took it into their heads to fall in love with each other. Well, her parents gave their consent to their being married, which, to be sure, I thought a very foolish thing, knowing the young man's inability to serve them: to be sure, he promised fair enough; but, Lord! what could a poor curate do for them, particularly when he got a wife, and a house full of children of his own, I thought; so I supposed they would be quite glad to be off with him, and to give her to Mr. Sipthorpe; but no such thing, I assure you: when I mentioned it to them, one talked of honour, and another of gratitude; and as to Miss Emily, she fairly went into fits. Well, I thought I would serve them in spite of themselves; so, knowing the curate to be a romantic young fellow, I writes off to him, and tells him what a cruel thing it would be, if, for his own gratification, he kept Miss Emily to her word, and made her lose a match which would free her family from all their difficulties: and, in short, I touched upon his passion not a little, I assure you: and, as I hoped, a letter came from him, in which he told her he gave her up. Well, to be sure, there was sad work when it came, with her, I mean; for the Captain and his wife were glad enough

enough of it, I believe, in their hearts: so, at last, every thing was settled for her marriage with Mr. Sipthorpe; and he made a number of handsome presents to her, I assure you, and they are to be married in a few days; he is only waiting for his rents in the country, to take the Captain out of prison. But, here is Miss Emily, instead of being quite merry and joyful, is as dull and as melancholy as if she was going to be married to a frightful old man."—"Consider," said Amanda, "you have just said her heart was pre-engaged."—"Lord!" cried Mrs. Connel, "a girl, at her time of life, can change her love as easily as her cap!"—"I sincerely hope," exclaimed Amanda, "that she either has, or may soon be able to transfer hers."—"And now pray, Madam," said Mrs. Connel, with a look which seemed to say Amanda should be as communicative as she had been, "may I ask from whence you have travelled?"—"From a remote part of Scotland."—"Dear, what a long journey! Lord! they say that is a very desolate place, Madam, without never a tree or a bush in it!"—"I assure you it wants neither shade nor verdure," replied Amanda.—"Really! Well, Lord what lies some people tell! Pray, Ma'am, may I ask what countrywoman you are?"—"Welch," said Amanda.—"Really! Well, I suppose, Ma'am, you have had many a scramble up the mountains after the goats, which, they say, are marvellous plenty in that part of the world?"—"No indeed," replied Amanda.—"Are you come

to

to make any long stay in London, Ma'am?"—"I have not determined."—"I suppose you have come about a little business, Ma'am?" resumed Mrs. Connel.—"Yes," replied Amanda.—"To be sure, not an affair of great consequence, or so young a lady would not have undertaken it?"—Amanda smiled, but made no reply; and was at length relieved from these tiresome and inquisitive questions, by Mrs. Connel's calling in her girls to tea; after which she washed the tea-things, put them into the beaufet, and left the room, to order something comfortable for supper.

Left to herself, Amanda reflected that, at the present juncture of Rushbrook's affairs, when his attention and time were engrossed by the approaching settlement of his daughter, an application to him, on her own account, would be not only impertinent, but unavailing; she therefore determined to wait till the hurry and agitation produced by such an event had subsided, and most sincerely did she hope that it might be productive of felicity to all.

Mrs. Connel was not long absent, and Emily returned almost at the moment she re-entered the room.—"Well, Miss," said Mrs. Connel, addressing her ere she had time to speak to Amanda, "I have been telling your good friend here all about your affairs."—"Have you, Ma'am?" cried Emily, with a faint smile and a dejected voice.—Amanda looked earnestly in her face, and saw an expression of the deepest sadness in it: from her own heart, she

readily

readily imagined what her feelings must be at such a disappointment as Mrs. Connel had mentioned, and felt the sincerest pity for her.

Mrs. Connel's volubility tormented them both: supper happily terminated it, as she was then much better employed, in her own opinion, than she could possibly have been in talking. Amanda pleaded fatigue for retiring early: Mrs. Connel advised her to try a few glasses of wine, as a restorative; but she begged to be excused, and was allowed to retire with Emily. The chamber was small, but neat, and enlivened by a good fire, to which Amanda and Emily sat down while undressing. The latter eagerly availed herself of this opportunity to express the gratitude of her heart. Amanda tried to change the discourse, but could not succeed. "Long, Madam," continued Emily, "have we wished to return our thanks for a benefaction so delicately conveyed as yours; and happy were my parents to-night, when I informed them I could now express their grateful feelings."—"Though interested exceedingly in your affairs," said Amanda, making another effort to change the discourse, "be assured I never should have taken the liberty of inquiring minutely into them; and I mention this, lest you might suppose, from what Mrs. Connel said, that I had done so."—"No, Madam," replied Emily, "I had no such idea; and an inquiry from you would be rather pleasing than otherwise, because I should then flatter myself you might be induced to listen to griefs which have

have long wanted the consolation of sympathy; such, I am sure, as they would receive from you." —"Happy should I be," cried Amanda, "had I the power of alleviating them!"—"Oh, Madam, you have the power," said Emily, "for you would commiserate them; and commiseration from you would be balm to my heart—you would strengthen me in my duties, you would instruct me in resignation: but I am selfish in desiring to intrude them on you."—"No," replied Amanda, taking her hand; "you flatter me by such a desire."—"Then, Madam, whilst you are undressing, I will give myself the melancholy indulgence of relating my little story."

CHAP. IV.

"Take heed, take heed, thou lovely maid,
Nor be by glitt'ring ills betray'd."

"To open our hearts to those we know will commiserate our sorrows, is the sweetest consolation those sorrows can receive: to you then, Madam, I divulge mine, sure at least of pity. At the time I first had the happiness of seeing you, the little credit my father had was exhausted; and his inability to pay being well known, he was arrested one evening, as he sat by the bedside of my almost-expiring mother,

ther. I will not pain your gentle nature by dwelling on the horrors of that moment, on the agonies of a parent and a husband, torn from a family so situated as was my father's: feeble, emaciated, without even sufficient clothing to guard him from the inclemency of the weather, he leaned upon the arm of one of the bailiffs, as he turned his eyes from that wife he never more expected to behold. She fainted at the moment he left the room, and it was many minutes ere I had power to approach her. The long continuance of her fit at length recalled my distracted thoughts; but I had no restoratives to apply, no assistance to recover her, for my eldest brother had followed my father, and the rest of the children, terrified by the scene they had witnessed, wept together in a corner of the room. I at last recollected a lady who lived nearly opposite to us, and from whom I hoped to procure some relief from her: nothing but the present emergency could have made me apply to her, for the attention she had paid us on first coming to Mr. Heathfield's was entirely withdrawn after his death: pride, however, was forgotten at the present moment, and I flew to her house. The servant shewed me into a parlour, where she, her daughters, and a young clergyman I had never before seen, were sitting at tea. I could not bring myself to mention my distress before a stranger, and accordingly begged to speak to her in another room; but she told me, in a blunt manner, I might speak there. In a low and faltering voice, which sighs and tears often

often impeded, I acquainted her of what had happened, the situation of my mother, and requested a cordial for her. How great was my confusion, when she declared aloud all I had told her; and, turning to her daughter, bade her give me part of a bottle of wine!—'Aye, aye,' cried she, 'I always thought things would turn out so: it was really very foolish of Mr. Heathfield to bring you to his house, and lead you all into such expences.'—I listened to no more, but, taking her wine with a silent pang, retired.

"I had not been many minutes returned, and was kneeling by the bedside of my mother, who began to shew some symptoms of returning life, when a gentle knock came to the hall-door: I supposed it my brother, and bade one of the children fly to open it. What was my surprise, when, in a few minutes, she returned, followed by the young clergyman I had just seen! I started from my kneeling posture, and my looks expressed my wonder. He approached, and in the soft accent of benevolence, apologized for his intrusion: but said, he came with a hope and a wish that he might be serviceable. Oh, how soothing was his voice! oh, how painfully pleasing the voice of tenderness to the wretched! The tears which pride and indignation had suspended but a few moments before, again began flowing.

"But I will not dwell upon my feelings—suffice it to say, that every attention which could mitigate my wretchedness he paid; and that his efforts, aided by

by mine, soon restored my mother: his looks, his manners, his profession, all conspired to calm her spirits; and she blessed the Power which so unexpectedly had given us a friend. My brother returned from my father, merely to inquire how we were, and to go back to him directly. The stranger requested permission to accompany him—a request most pleasing to us; and we trusted his soothing attention would have the same effect upon his sorrowing heart as it had upon ours. Scarcely were they gone, ere a man arrived from a neighbouring hotel, with a basket loaded with wine and provisions. But, to enumerate every instance of this young man's goodness would be encroaching upon your patience: in short, by his care, my mother, in a few days, was able to be carried to my father's prison.

"Mrs. Connel, who, on the first intimation of our distress, had come to us, took me into the house at a stated salary, which was to be given to my parents, and the rest of the children were to continue with them.—My mother desired me, one evening, to take a walk with the children to Kensington, as she thought them injured by constant confinement. Our friend attended us, and in our way thither, informed me that he must soon leave town, as he was but a country curate, and his leave of absence from his Rector was expired: it was above a month since we had known him, during which time his attentions were unremitting, and he was a source of comfort to us all: a sudden chill came over my heart as he spoke;

spoke; and every sorrow, at that moment, seemed aggravated. On entering Kensington Gardens, I seated myself on a little rising mount, for I felt trembling and fatigued, and he sat beside me. Never had I before felt so oppressed, and my tears gushed forth, in spite of my efforts to restrain them. Something I said of their being occasioned by the recollection of the period, when my parents enjoyed the charming scene I now contemplated along with him. —'Would to Heaven,' cried he, 'I could restore them again to the enjoyment of it!'—'Ah!' said I, 'they already lie under unreturnable obligations to you: in losing you,' added I involuntarily, 'they will lose their only comfort.'—'Since then,' cried he, 'you flatter me, by saying it is in my power to give them comfort, oh! let them have a constant claim upon me for it! Oh, Emily,' he continued, taking my hand, 'let them be my parents as well as yours! then will their too scrupulous delicacy be conquered, and they will receive as a right, what they now consider as a favour.'—I felt my cheeks glow with blushes, but still did not perfectly conceive his meaning.—'My destiny is humble,' he continued; 'was it otherwise, I should long since have entreated you to share it with me: could you be prevailed on to do so, you would give it pleasures it never yet experienced.'—He paused for a reply, but I was unable to give one.

"Ah, Madam! how little necessity either was there for one!—my looks, my confusion, betrayed

my feelings. He urged me to speak, and at last I acknowledged I should not hesitate to share his destiny, but for my parents, who, by such a measure, would lose my assistance.—'Oh! do not think,' cried he, 'I would ever wish to tempt you into any situation which would make you neglect them.'—He then proceeded to say, that though unable, at present, to liberate them, yet he trusted that, if they consented to our union, he should, by economy, be enabled to contribute more essentially to their support than I could do, and also be able in a short time to discharge their debts. His proposals were made known to them, and met their warmest approbation: the pleasure they derived from them was more on my account than their own, as the idea of having me so settled, removed a weight of anxiety from their minds. Some of my brothers and sisters should live with us, he said; and promised my time should be chiefly spent in doing fine works, which should be sent to Mrs. Connel, to dispose of for my parents; and also that, from time to time, I should visit them, till I had the power of bringing them to my cottage, for such he described his residence.

"He was compelled to go to the country; but it was settled he should return in a short time, and have every thing finally settled. In about a week after his departure, as I was returning one morning from a lady's, where I had been on a message from Mrs. Connel, a gentleman joined me in the street, and with a rude familiarity, endeavoured to enter into

into conversation with me.' I endeavoured to shake him off, but could not succeed; and hastened home with the utmost expedition, whither I saw he followed me. I thought no more of the incident, till, about two days after, I saw him enter the shop, and heard him inquire of Mrs. Connel about her lodgings, which, to my great mortification, he immediately took; for I could not help suspecting he had some improper motive for taking them. I resolved, however, if such a motive really existed, to disappoint it, by keeping out of his way; but all my vigilance was unavailing—he was continually on the watch for me, and I could not go up or down stairs without being insulted by him. I at length informed Mrs. Connel of his conduct, and entreated her to fulfil the sacred trust her friends reposed in her, when they gave me to her care, by terminating the insults of Mr. Sipthorpe. Alas! could I have possibly foreseen the consequences that would have followed my application to her, I should have borne those insults in silence:—she has already informed you of them. Oh, Madam! when the letter came which dissolved a promise so cheerfully, so fondly given, every prospect of felicity was in a moment overshadowed. For a long time I resisted every effort that was made to prevail on me to marry Sipthorpe; but when, at last, my mother said she was sorry to find my generosity less than his, who had so nobly resigned me, that my father might be extricated from his difficulties, I shrunk with agony at

the rebuke—I wondered, I was shocked, how I could have so long hesitated to open the prison-gates of my father; and determined, from that moment, to sacrifice myself for him; for oh, Miss Donald, it is a sacrifice of the most dreadful nature I am about making! Sipthorpe is a man I never could have liked, had my heart even been disengaged."

Amanda felt the truest pity for her young friend, who ended her narrative in tears; but she did not, by yielding entirely to that pity (as too many girls, with tender hearts but weak heads, might have done), heighten the sorrow of Miss Rushbrook. She proved her friendship and sympathy more sincerely than she could have done by mere expressions of condolement, which feed the grief they commiserate, in trying to reconcile her to a destiny that seemed irrevocable: she pointed out the claims a parent had upon a child, and dwelt upon the delight a child experienced when conscious of fulfilling those claims: she spoke of the rapture attending the triumph of reason and humanity over self and passion, and mentioned the silent plaudits of the heart, as superior to all gratification or external advantages: she spoke from the real feelings of her soul. She recollected the period at which, to a father's admonition, she had resigned a lover; and, had that father been in Captain Rushbrook's situation, and the same sacrifice been demanded from her as from Emily, she felt, without hesitation, she would have made it. She was indeed a monitress that had practised, and would practise,

was

was there a necessity for so doing, the lessons she gave; not, as poor Ophelia says,

> "Like some ungracious pastors,
> Who shew the steep and thorny path to Heav'n,
> But take the primrose one themselves."

The sweet consciousness of this gave energy, gave more than usual eloquence, to her language; but whilst she wished to inspirit her young friend, she felt, from the tenderness of her nature and the sad situation of her own heart, what that friend must feel, from disappointed affection and a reluctant union; scarcely could she refrain from weeping over a fate so wretched, and which she was tempted to think as dreadful as her own: but a little reflection soon convinced her she had the sad pre-eminence of misery; for in her fate there was none of those alleviations as in Emily's, which, she was convinced, must, in some degree, reconcile her to it; her sufferings, unlike Emily's, would not be rewarded, by knowing that they contributed to the comfort of those dearest to her heart.—"Your words, my dear Madam," said Emily, "have calmed my spirits; henceforth I will be more resolute in trying to banish regrets from my mind. But I have been inconsiderate to a degree, in keeping you so long from rest, after your fatiguing journey."—Amanda indeed appeared, at this moment, nearly exhausted, and gladly hastened to bed. Her slumbers were short and unrefreshing—the cares which clung to her heart

when waking, were equally oppressive whilst sleeping: Lord Mortimer mingled in the meditations of the morning, in the visions of the night; and when she awoke, she found her pillow wet with the tears she had shed on his account.

Emily was already up; but, on Amanda's drawing back the curtain, she laid down the book she was reading, and came to her. She saw she looked extremely ill, and imputing this to fatigue, requested she would breakfast in bed; but Amanda, who knew her illness proceeded from a cause which neither rest nor assiduous care could cure, refused complying with this request, and immediately dressed herself. As she stood at the toilet, Emily suddenly exclaimed, "If you have a mind to see Sipthorpe, I will shew him to you now, for he is just going out."—Amanda went to the window, which Emily gently opened; but, oh! what was the shock of that moment, when, in Sipthorpe, she recognised the insidious Belgrave! A shivering horror ran through her veins, and recoiling a few paces, she sunk half fainting on a chair. Emily, terrified by her appearance, was flying to the bell to ring for assistance, when, by a faint motion of her hand, Amanda prevented her. "I shall soon be better," said she, speaking with difficulty; "but I will lie down on the bed for a few minutes, and I beg you may go to your breakfast."—Emily refused to go; and entreated that, instead of leaving her, she might have breakfast

fast brought up for them both. Amanda assured her she could take nothing at present, and wished for quiet. Emily therefore reluctantly left her.

Amanda now endeavoured to compose her distracted thoughts, and quiet the throbbings of her agonized heart, that she might be able to arrange some plan for extricating herself from her present situation, which appeared replete with every danger to her imagination; for, from the libertine principles of Belgrave, she could not hope that a new object of pursuit would detach him from her, when he found her so unexpectedly thrown in his way. Unprotected as she was, she could not think of openly avowing her knowledge of Belgrave; to discover his baseness required, therefore, caution and deliberation, lest, in saving Emily from the snare spread for her destruction, she should entangle herself in it: to declare at once his real character, must betray her to him; and though she might banish him from the house, yet, unsupported as she was by friends or kindred, unable to procure the protection of Rushbrook in his present situation, however willing he might be to extend it, she trembled to think of the dangers to which, by thus discovering, she might expose herself—dangers which the deep treachery and daring effrontery of Belgrave would, in all probability, prevent her escaping. As the safest measure, she resolved on quitting the house in the course of the day, but without giving any intimation that she meant not to return to it. She recollected a

place where there was a probability of her getting lodgings, which would be at once secret and secure; and, by an anonymous letter to Captain Rushbrook, she intended to acquaint him of his daughter's danger, and refer him to Sir Charles Bingley, at whose agent's he could receive intelligence of him for the truth of what she said. Her plan concerted, she grew more composed, and was able, when Emily entered the room with her breakfast, to ask, in a seemingly-careless manner, when Mr. Sipthorpe was expected back?—"It is very uncertain indeed," answered she.—"I must go out, in the course of the day," said Amanda, "about particular business; I may therefore as well prepare myself at once for it."—She accordingly put on her habit, and requested materials for writing from Emily, which were immediately brought; and Emily then retired till she had written her letter. Amanda, left to herself, hastily unlocked her little trunk, and taking from it two changes of linen and the will and narrative of Lady Dunreath, she deposited the two former in her pocket, and the two latter in her bosom; then sat down, and wrote the following letter to Captain Rushbrook:—

"A PERSON who esteems the character of Captain Rushbrook, and the amiable simplicity of his daughter, cautions him to guard that simplicity against the danger which now threatens it, from a wretch who, under the sacred semblance of virtue,

virtue, designs to fix a sharper sting in the bosom of affliction than adversity ever yet implanted. The worth of Sipthorpe is not more fictitious than his name—his real one is Belgrave. His hand is already another's; and his character, for many years past, marked with instances of deceit, if not equal, at least little inferior to the present. For the truth of these assertions, the writer of this letter refers Captain Rushbrook to Sir Charles Bingley, of ——— regiment, from whose agent a direction may be procured to him; certain, from his honour and sensibility, he will eagerly step forward to save worth and innocence from woe and destruction."

Amanda's anxiety about Emily being equal to what she felt for herself, she resolved to leave this letter at Rushbrook's prison, lest any accident should happen, if it went by any other hands. She was anxious to be gone, but thought it better to wait till towards evening, when there would be the least chance of meeting Belgrave, who, at that time, would probably be fixed in some place for the remainder of the day.

Emily returned in about an hour, and finding Amanda disengaged, requested permission to sit with her. Amanda, in her present agitation, would have preferred solitude, but could not decline the company of the affectionate girl, who, in conversing with her, sought to forget the heavy cares which the dreadful idea of an union with Sipthorpe had drawn

upon her. Amanda listened with a beating heart to every sound, but no intimation of Belgrave's return reached her ear. At length they were summoned to dinner; but Amanda could not think of going to it, lest she should be seen by him. To avoid this risk, and also the particularity of a refusal, she determined immediately to go out; and having told Emily her intention, they both descended the stairs together. Emily pressed her exceedingly to stay for dinner, but she positively refused, and left the house with a beating heart, without having answered Emily's question, who desired to know if she would not soon return. Thus perpetually threatened with danger, like a frighted bird, again was she to seek a shelter for her innocent head.

She walked with quickness to Oxford-street, where she directly procured a carriage, but was so weak and agitated, the coachman was almost obliged to lift her into it. She directed it to the prison; and on reaching it, sent for one of the turnkeys, to whom she gave a letter for Rushbrook, with a particular charge to deliver it immediately to him. She then ordered the carriage to Pall-Mall, where, it may be remembered, she had once lodged with Lady Greystock. This was the only lodging-house in London she knew, and in it she expected no satisfaction but what would be derived from thinking herself safe, as its mistress was a woman of a most unpleasant temper: she had once been in affluent circumstances, and the remembrance of those circumstances

cumstances soured her temper, and rendered her, if not incapable of enjoying, at least unwilling to acknowledge the blessings she yet possessed: on any one in her power she vented her spleen. Her chief pursuit was the gratification of a most insatiate curiosity; and her first delight, relating the affairs, good or bad, which that curiosity dived into.—Amanda, finding she was within, dismissed the coach, and was shewn by the maid into the back parlour, where she sat.—"Oh dear!" cried she, with a supercilious smile, the moment Amanda entered, without rising from her chair to return her salute, "when did you return to London? and pray, may I ask, what brought you back to it?"—Amanda was convinced, from Mrs. Hansard's altered manner, who had once been servile to a degree to her, that she was perfectly acquainted with her destitute condition, and a heavy sigh burst from her heart, at the idea of associating with a woman who had the meanness to treat her ill because of that condition: a chilliness crept through her frame, when she reflected her sad situation might long compel her to this: sick, weak, exhausted, she sunk upon a chair, which she had neither been offered nor desired to take.

"Well, Miss, and pray what is your business in town?" again asked Mrs. Hansard, with an increased degree of pertness.—"My business, Madam," replied Amanda, "can be of no consequence to a person not connected with me. My business with you is to know whether you can accommodate me

with lodgings?"—"Really! Well, you might have paid me the compliment of saying you would have called, at any rate, to know how I did. You may guess how greatly flattered an humble being like me would be, by the notice of so amiable a young lady." —These words were pronounced with a kind of sneer, that, by rousing the pride of Amanda, a little revived her spirits. "I should be glad, Madam," said she with a composed voice, while a faint glow stole over her cheek, "to know whether you can, or choose to accommodate me with lodgings?"— "Lord, my dear!" replied Mrs. Hansard, "do not be in such a wondrous hurry: take a cup of tea with me, and then we will settle about that business." —These words implied that she would comply with the wish of Amanda; and however disagreeable the asylum, yet to have secured one, cheered her sinking heart.

Tea was soon made, which, to Amanda, who had touched nothing since breakfast, and but little then, would have been a pleasant refreshment, had she not been tormented and fatigued by the questions of Mrs. Hansard, who laid a thousand baits to betray her into a full confession of what had brought her to London. Amanda, though a stranger, in herself, to every species of art, from fatal experience, was aware of it in others, and therefore guarded her secret.—Mrs. Hansard, who loved what she called a gossipping cup of tea, sat a tedious time over the tea-table. Amanda, at last mortified and alarmed by some

some expressions which dropped from her, again ventured to ask if she could be lodged under her roof?—"Are you really serious in that question?" said Mrs. Hansard (there was a certain expression of contempt in her features as she spoke, which shocked Amanda so much, that she had not power to reply); "because, if you are, my dear," continued Mrs. Hansard, "you have more assurance than I thought you possessed of, though I always gave you credit for a pretty large share. Do you think I would ruin my house, which lodges people of the first rank and character, by admitting you into it—you, who, it is well known, obtained Lady Greystock's protection from charity, and lost it through misconduct? Poor Lady! I had the whole story from her own mouth: she suffered well by having any thing to say to you. I always guessed how it would be; notwithstanding your demure look, I saw well enough how you would turn out. I assure you, to use your own words, if I could accommodate you in my house, it would not answer you at all; for there are no convenient closets in it, in which a lady of your disposition might now and then want to hide a smart young fellow. I advise you, if you have had a tiff with any of your friends, to make up the difference; though indeed if you do not, in such a place as London, you can never be at a loss for such friends. Perhaps you are now beginning to repent of your evil courses; and if I took

took you into my house, I should suffer as much in my pocket, I suppose, as in my character."

The terrified and distressed look with which Amanda listened to this speech, would have stopped Mrs. Hansard in the middle of it, had she possessed a spark of humanity, even if she believed her (which was not the case) guilty; but, lost to the noble, the gentle feelings of humanity, she exulted in the triumph of malice, and rejoiced to have an opportunity of piercing the panting heart of helpless innocence with the sharp darts of insult and unmerited reproach. Amidst the various shocks Amanda had experienced in the short, but eventful course of her life, one greater than the present she had never felt; petrified by Mrs. Hansard's words, it was some time ere she had power to speak. "Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed she at last, looking up to that Heaven she addressed, and which she now considered her only refuge from evil, "to what trials am I continually exposed, persecuted, insulted, shocked! Oh, what happiness to lay my feeble frame, my woe-struck heart, within that low asylum, where malice could no more annoy, deceit no more betray me!—I am happy," she continued, starting up, and looking at Mrs. Hansard, "that the accommodation I desired in this house you refused me; for I am now well convinced, from the knowledge of your disposition, that the security my situation requires I should not have found within it."

She

She hastily quitted the room; but, on entering the hall, her spirits entirely forsook her, at the dreadful idea of having no home to go to. Overcome with horror, she sunk, in a flood of tears, upon one of the hall-chairs. A maid, who had probably been listening to her mistress's conversation, now came from a front parlour; and as Mrs. Hansard had shut the door after Amanda, addressed her without fear of being overheard. "Bless me, Miss!" said she, "are you crying? Why, Lord! surely you would not mind what old blouzy in the parlour says? I promise you, if we minded her, we should have red eyes here every day in the week. Do, pray, Miss, tell me if I can be of any service to you?"—Amanda, in a voice scarcely articulate, thanked her, and said, in a few minutes she would be better able to speak. To seek lodgings at this late hour, was not to be thought of, except she wished to run into the very dangers she had wanted to avoid; and Mrs. Connel's house returned to her recollection, as the impossibility of procuring a refuge in any other was confirmed in her mind. She began to think it could not be so dangerous as her fears in the morning had represented it to be; ere this, she thought, Belgrave (for, since the delivery of the letter, there had been time enough for such a proceeding) might be banished from it; if not, she had a chance of concealing herself; and, even if discovered, she believed Mrs. Connel would protect her from his open insults; whilst, she trusted, her own precaution would, under

der Heaven, defeat his secret schemes, should he again contrive any. She therefore resolved, or rather necessity compelled her (for, could she have avoided it, she would not have done so), to return to Mrs. Connel's: she accordingly requested the maid to procure her a carriage, and rewarded her for her trouble.

As she was returning to Mrs. Connel's, she endeavoured to calm her spirits, and quell her apprehensions. When the carriage stopped, and the maid appeared, she could scarcely prevent herself, ere she alighted, from inquiring whether any one but the family was within? Conscious, however, that such a question might create suspicions, and that suspicions would naturally excite inquiries, she checked herself, and re-entered, though with trembling limbs, that house, from whence, in the morning, she had fled with such terror.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Why, thou poor mourner, in what baleful corner
Hast thou been talking with that witch, the night?
On what cold stone hast thou been stretch'd along,
Gathering the grumbling winds about thy head,
To mix with theirs the accents of thy woes? OTWAY.

AMANDA had not reached the parlour, when the door opened, and Mrs. Connel came from it. "Oh, oh, Miss!" cried she, "so you are returned! I protest I was beginning to think you had stolen a march upon us."—There was a rude bluntness in this speech which confounded Amanda, and her mind misgave her that all was not right.—"Come!" continued Mrs. Connel, "come in, Miss; I assure you I have been very impatient for your return."—Amanda's fears increased; she followed Mrs. Connel in silence into the parlour, where she beheld an elderly woman, of a pleasing but emaciated appearance, who seemed in great agitation and distress. How she could possibly have any thing to say to this woman, she could not conjecture; and yet an idea that she had instantly darted into her mind. She sat down trembling in every limb, and waited with impatience for an explanation of this scene. After a general silence of a few minutes, the stranger, looking

looking at Amanda, said, "My daughter, Madam, has informed me we are indebted to your bounty; I am therefore happy at an opportunity of discharging the debt."—These words announced Mrs. Rushbrook; but Amanda was confounded at her manner—its coolness and formality were more expressive of dislike and severity, than of gentleness or gratitude. Mrs. Rushbrook rose as she spoke, and offered a note to her. Speechless from astonishment, Amanda had not power either to decline or accept of it, and it was laid on a table before her.—"Allow me, Madam," said Mrs. Rushbrook, as she resumed her seat, "to ask if your real name is Donald?"—Amanda's presentiment of underhand doings was now verified; it was evident to her that their author was Belgrave, and that he had been too successful in contriving them.

Amanda now appeared to have reached the crisis of her fate: in all the various trials she had hitherto experienced, she had still some stay, some hope, to support her weakness, and sooth her sorrows; when groaning under the injuries her character sustained by the success of an execrable plot, she had the consolation to think an idolizing father would shelter her from further insult; when deprived of that father, tender friends stepped forward, who mingled tears of sympathy with hers, and poured the balm of pity on her sorrowing heart; when torn from the beloved object enshrined within that heart, while her sick soul languished under the heavy burthen of existence,

istence, again did the voice of friendship penetrate its gloom, and though it could not remove, alleviated its sufferings: now, helpless, unprotected, she saw a dreadful storm ready to burst over her devoted head, without one hope to cheer, one stretched-out arm to shield her from its violence: surrounded by strangers prejudiced against her, she could not think that her plain unvarnished tale would gain their credence, or prevail on them to protect her from the wretch whose machinations had ruined her in their estimation. The horrors of her situation all at once assailing her mind, overpowered its faculties; a kind of mental sickness seized her; she leaned her throbbing head upon her hand, and a deep groan burst from her agonized heart.

"You see," said Mrs. Connel, after a long silence, "she cannot brave this discovery."—Amanda raised her head at these words—she had grown a little more composed. "The Being in whom I trust," said she to herself, "and whom I never wilfully offended, will still, I doubt not, as heretofore, protect me from danger."—Mrs. Rushbrook's unanswered question still sounded in her ear.—"Allow me, Madam," she cried, turning to her, "to ask your reason for inquiring whether my real name is Donald?"—"Oh Lord, my dear!" said Mrs. Connel, addressing Mrs. Rushbrook, "you need not pester yourself or her with any more questions about the matter; her question is an answer in itself."—"I am of your opinion indeed," exclaimed Mrs.

Mrs. Rushbrook, "and think any further inquiry needless."—"I acknowledge, Madam," said Amanda, whose voice grew firmer from the consciousness of never having acted improperly, "that my name is not Donald: I must also do myself the justice to declare (let it be credited or not), that my real one was not concealed from any motive which could deserve reproach or censure. My situation is peculiarly distressing: my only consolation amidst my difficulties is, the idea of never having drawn them upon myself by imprudence."—"I do not want, Madam," replied Mrs. Rushbrook, "to inquire into your situation; you have been candid in one instance, I hope you will be equally so in another. Pray, Madam," handing to Amanda the letter she had written to Rushbrook, "is this your writing?"—"Yes, Madam," answered Amanda, whose pride was roused by the contempt she met, "it is my writing."—"And pray," said Mrs. Rushbrook, looking stedfastly at her, while her voice grew more severe, "what was your motive for writing this letter?"—"I think, Madam," cried Amanda, "the letter explains that."—"A pretty explanation truly!" exclaimed Mrs. Connel. "And so you would try to vilify the poor man's character? But, Miss, we have had an explanation you little dream of; aye, we found you out, notwithstanding your slyness in writing, like one of the madams in a novel, a bit of a letter without ever a name to it: Mr. Sipthorpe knew directly who it came from. Ah,

poor

poor gentleman! he allowed you wit enough; a pity there is not more goodness with it. He knows you very well, to his cost."—"Yes," said Amanda, "he knows I am a being whose happiness he disturbed, but whose innocence he never triumphed over: he knows that, like an evil genius, he has pursued my wandering footsteps, heaping sorrow upon sorrow on me by his machinations: but he also knows, when encompassed with those sorrows, perplexed with those machinations, I rose superior to them all, and, with uniform contempt and abhorrence, rejected his offers."—"Depend upon it," cried Mrs. Connel, "she has been an actress."—"Yes, Madam," said Amanda, whose struggling voice confessed the anguish of her soul, "upon a stage where I have seen a sad variety of scenes."—"Come, come," exclaimed Mrs. Connel, "confess all about yourself and Sipthorpe; full confession will entitle you to pardon."—"It behoves me indeed," said Amanda, "to be explicit—my character requires it; and my wish," she continued, turning to Mrs. Rushbrook, "to save you from a fatal blow, demands it." She then proceeded to relate every thing she knew concerning Belgrave; but she had the mortification to find her short and simple story received with every mark of incredulity.—"Beware, Madam," said she to Mrs. Rushbrook, "of this infatuation; I adjure you, beware of the consequences of it. Oh! doom not your innocent, your reluctant Emily, to destruction! draw not upon

on your own head, by such a deed, horrible and excruciating anguish! Why does not Mr. Sipthorpe, if I must call him so, appear, and in my presence, support his allegations?"—"I asked him to do so," replied Mrs. Rushbrook; "but he has feeling, and he wished not to see your distress, however merited it might be."—"No, Madam," cried Amanda; "he refused, because he knew that, without shrinking, he could not behold the innocence he has so abused; because he knew the conscious colouring of his cheek would betray the guilty feelings of his soul. Again I repeat, he is not what he appears to be: I refer you for the truth of my words to Sir Charles Bingley. I feel for you, though you have not felt for me: I know, from false representations, you think me a poor misguided creature; but, were I even so, my too-evident anguish might surely have excited pity: pardon me, Madam, if I say your conduct to me has been most unkind. The gentle virtues are surely those best fitting a female breast: she that shews leniency to a fallen fellow-creature fulfils the divine precept; the tear she sheds over her frailties is consecrated in the sight of Heaven, and her compassion draws a blessing on her own head. Oh, Madam! I once looked forward to a meeting with you, far, far different from the present one! I once flattered myself that, from the generous friendship of Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook, I should derive support and consolation; but this, like every other hope, is disappointed."—Amanda's voice faltered at these

these last words, and tears again trickled down her lovely cheeks.

A faint glow tinged the pale cheek of Mrs. Rushbrook, at Amanda's accusation of unkindness: she bent her eyes to the ground, as if conscious it was merited, and it was many minutes ere she could again look on the trembling creature before her.—"Perhaps," said she at last, "I may have spoken too severely; but, it must be allowed, I had great provocation: friendship and gratitude could not avoid resenting such shocking charges as yours against Sipthorpe."—"For my part, I wonder you spoke so mildly to her," exclaimed Mrs. Connel: "I protest, in future, I shall be guarded who I admit into my house. I declare she seemed so distressed at the idea of going amongst strangers, that, sooner than let her do so, I believe, if Miss Emily had not, I should have offered her part of my bed; but this distress was all a pretext to get into the house with Mr. Sipthorpe, that she might try to entangle him in her snares again. Well, I am determined she shall not stay another night under my roof: aye, you may stare as you please, Miss, but you shall march directly: you are not so ignorant of London, I dare say, as you pretend to be."—Mrs. Connel rose as she spoke, and approached her with a look which seemed to say, she would put her threat into execution.—It was Amanda's intention to quit the house the next morning; but, to be turned from it at such an hour, a wanderer in the street—

street—the idea was replete with horror. She started up, and retreating a few paces, looked at Mrs. Connel with a kind of melancholy wildness.—"Yes," repeated Mrs. Connel, "I say you shall march directly."—The wretched Amanda's head grew giddy, her sight failed, her limbs refused to support her, and she would have fallen to the ground, had not Mrs. Rushbrook, who perceived her situation, timely caught her. She was replaced in a chair, and water sprinkled on her face.—"Be composed, my dear," said Mrs. Rushbrook, whose softened voice proclaimed the return of her compassion; "you shall not leave this house to-night, I promise, in the name of Mrs. Connel: she is a good-natured woman, and would not aggravate your distress."—"Aye, Lord knows, good nature is my foible," exclaimed Mrs. Connel. "So, Miss, as Mrs. Rushbrook has promised, you may stay here to-night."—Amanda, opening her languid eyes, and raising her head from Mrs. Rushbrook's bosom, said, in a low, tremulous voice, "To-morrow, Madam, I shall depart. Oh! would to Heaven," cried she, clasping her hands together, and bursting into an agony of tears, "before to-morrow, I could be rid of the heavy burthen that oppresses me!"—"Well, we have had wailing and weeping enough to-night," said Mrs. Connel; "so, Miss, you may take one of the candles off the table, and go to your chamber, if you choose."

Amanda did not require to have this permission repeated:

repeated: she arose, and taking the light, left the parlour. With feeble steps she ascended to the little chamber: but here all was dark and solitary; no cheerful fire sent forth an animating blaze; no gentle Emily, like the mild genius of benevolence, appeared to offer, with undissembled kindness, her little attentions: forsaken, faint, the pale child of misery laid down the candle, and seating herself at the foot of the bed, gave way to deep and agonizing sorrow. "Was I ever," she asked herself, "blessed with friends, who valued my existence as their own, who called me the beloved of their hearts?—Oh, yes!" she groaned, "once such friends were mine; and the sad remembrance of them aggravates my present misery. Oh! happy is our ignorance of futurity! Oh, my father! had you been permitted to read the awful volume of Fate, the page marked with your Amanda's destiny would have rendered your existence miserable, and made you wish a thousand times the termination of hers! Oh, Oscar! from another hand than mine must you receive the deed which shall entitle you to independence; my trials sink me to the grave, to that grave where, but for the sweet hope of again seeing you, I should long since have wished myself!"

The chamber-door opened: she turned her eyes to it, in expectation of seeing Emily, but was disappointed, on perceiving only the maid of the house.—"Oh, dear Ma'am!" cried she, going up to Amanda, "I declare it quite grieves me to see you in such a

situation! Poor Miss Emily is just in as bad a plight. Well, it is no matter; but I think both the old ladies will be punished for plaguing you in this manner. Madam Rushbrook will be sorry enough, when, after giving her daughter to Mr. Sipthorpe, she finds he is not what he seems to be."—Amanda shrunk with horror from the idea of Emily's destruction, and, by a motion of her hand, signified to the maid her dislike to the subject.—"Well, Ma'am," she continued, "Miss Emily, as I was saying, is quite in as bad a plight as yourself: they have clapped her into my mistress's chamber, which she durst not leave without running the risk of bringing their tongues upon her: however, she contrived to see me, and sent you this note." Amanda took it, and read the following lines:—

"I HOPE my dear Miss Donald will not doubt my sincerity, when I declare that all my sorrows are heightened, by knowing I have been the occasion of trouble to her. I have heard of the unworthy treatment she has received in this house, and her intention of quitting it to-morrow: knowing her averseness to lodge in a place she is unacquainted with, I have been speaking to the maid about her, and had the satisfaction to hear, that, through her means, my dear Miss Donald might be safely accommodated for a short time, long enough, however, to permit her to look out for an eligible situation: I refer her for particulars of the conversation

sation to the maid, whose fidelity may be relied on. To think I may be useful to my dear Miss Donald, affords me the only pleasure I am capable of enjoying: in her esteem may I ever retain the place of a sincere and affectionate friend! E. R."

"And where is the place I can be lodged in?" eagerly asked Amanda.—"Why, Ma'am," said the maid, "I have a sister who is a housemaid at a very grand place on the Richmond road; all the family are now gone to Brighton, and she is left alone in the house, where you would be very welcome to take up your residence till you could get one to your mind. My sister is a sage, sober body, and would do every thing in her power to please and oblige you; and you would be as snug and secure with her, as in a house of your own: and poor Miss Emily begged you would go to her, till you could get lodgings with people whose characters you know; and indeed, Ma'am, it is my humble opinion, it would be safe and pleasant for you to do so: and if you consent, I will conduct you there to-morrow morning; and I am sure, Ma'am, I shall be happy if I have the power of serving you."—Like the lady in Comus, Amanda might have said,

"I take thy word,
And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy;
For in a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence! and square my trial
To my proportion'd strength."

To take refuge, in this manner, in any one's house, was truly repugnant to the feelings of Amanda; but sad necessity conquered her scrupulous delicacy, and she asked the maid at what hour in the morning she should be ready for her?—"I shall come to you, Ma'am," answered she, "as soon as I think there is a carriage on the stand, and then we can go together to get one. But I protest, Ma'am, you look sadly; I wish you would allow me to assist in undressing you, for I am sure you want a little rest. I dare say, for all my mistress said, if you chose it, I could get a little wine from her to make whey for you."—Amanda refused this, but accepted her offer of assistance; for she was so overpowered by the scenes of the day as to be almost unequal to any exertion. The maid retired, after she had seen her to bed. Amanda entreated her to be punctual to an early hour, and also requested her to give her most affectionate love to Miss Rushbrook, and her sincere thanks for the kind solicitude she had expressed about her.

Her rest was now, as on the preceding night, broken and disturbed by frightful visions: she arose, pale, trembling, and unrefreshed. The maid came to her soon after she was dressed, and she immediately accompanied her down stairs, trembling as she went, lest Belgrave should suddenly make his appearance, and either prevent her departure, or follow her to her new residence: she left the house, however, without meeting any creature, and soon obtained

tained the shelter of a carriage. As they proceeded, Amanda besought the maid, who seemed perfectly acquainted with every thing relative to Belgrave, to tell Miss Rushbrook to believe her assertions against him, if she wished to save herself from destruction. The maid assured her she would, and declared she always suspected Mr. Sipthorpe was not as good as he should be.

Amanda soon found herself at the end of her little journey. The house was elegant and spacious, with a short avenue before it, planted with chesnuts: the maid's sister was an elderly, plain-looking woman, who received Amanda with every appearance of respect, and conducted her into a handsome parlour, where a neat breakfast was laid out. "I took care, Ma'am," said the maid, smiling, "to apprise my sister last night of the honour she was to have this morning, and I am sure she will do every thing in her power to oblige you."—"I thank you both," cried Amanda, with her usual sweetness; but, while she spoke, a straggling tear stole down her lovely cheek, at the idea of that forlorn situation which had thus cast her upon the kindness of strangers, strangers who were themselves the children of poverty and dependance. "I hope, however," she continued, "I shall not long be a trouble to either, as it is my intention immediately to look out for a lodging among the cottagers in this neighbourhood, till I can settle my affairs to return to my friends: in the meantime, I must insist on making some re-

compence for the attention I have received, and the expence I have put you to."—She accordingly forced a present upon each, for both the women appeared unwilling to accept them; and Mrs. Deborah, the maid's sister, said it was quite unnecessary at present to think of leaving the house, as the family would not return to it for six weeks. Amanda, however, was resolved on doing what she had said, as she could not conquer her repugnance to continue in a stranger's house. Mrs. Connel's maid departed in a few minutes.

Of the breakfast prepared for her, Amanda could only take some tea: her head ached violently, and her whole frame felt disordered. Mrs. Deborah, seeing her dejection, proposed shewing her the house and garden, which were very fine, to amuse her; but Amanda declined the proposal at present, saying, she thought, if she lay down, she should be better. She was immediately conducted to an elegant chamber, where Mrs. Deborah left her, saying she would prepare some little nice thing for her dinner, which she hoped would tempt her to eat.

Amanda now tried to compose her spirits, by reflecting she was in a place of security; but their agitation was not to be subdued from the sleep into which mere fatigue threw her—she was continually starting, in inexpressible terrors. Mrs. Deborah came up two or three times to know how she was, and at last appeared with dinner. She laid a small table by the bedside, and besought Amanda to rise,

and

and try to eat: there was a friendliness in her manner, which recalled to Amanda's recollection her faithful nurse Edwin; and she sighed to think that the shelter of her humble cottage she could no more enjoy (should such a shelter be required) from its vicinity to Tudor Hall, near which every feeling of propriety and tenderness must forbid her residing; the sad remembrance of which, now reviving in her mind, drew tears from her, and rendered her unable to eat. She thanked Mrs. Deborah for her attention; but, anxious to be alone, said she would no longer detain her: yet no sooner was she alone, than she found solitude insupportable—she could not sleep, the anguish of her mind was so great, and arose with the idea that a walk in the garden might be of use to her. As she was descending the stairs, she heard, notwithstanding the door was shut, a man's voice from a front parlour: she started, for she thought it was a voice familiar to her ear. With a light foot and a throbbing heart, she turned into a parlour at the foot of the stairs, which communicated with the other: here she listened, and soon had her fears confirmed, by recollecting the voice to be that of Belgrave's servant, whom she had often seen in Devonshire: she listened with that kind of horror which the trembling wretch may be supposed to feel, when about hearing a sentence he expects to be dreadful.

"Aye, I assure you," cried the man, "we are blown up at Mrs. Connel's; but that is of little

consequence to us: the Colonel thinks the game now in view better than that he has lost; so, to-night, you may expect him in a chaise-and-four, to carry off your fair guest."—"I declare I am glad of it," said Mrs. Deborah, "for I think she will die soon."—"Die soon!" repeated he: "oh, yes indeed! great danger of that!" and he added something else, which being delivered with a violent burst of laughter, Amanda could not hear. She thought she heard them moving towards the door: she instantly slipped from the parlour, and ascending the stairs in breathless haste, stopped outside the chamber-door to listen. In a few minutes she heard them coming into the hall, and the man softly let out by Mrs. Deborah.

Amanda now entered the chamber, and closed the door; and knowing a guilty conscience is easily alarmed, she threw herself on the bed, lest Mrs. Deborah, if she found her up, should have her suspicions awakened. Her desperate situation inspired her with strength and courage; and she trusted, by presence of mind, to be able to extricate herself from it. It was her intention, if she effected her escape, to proceed directly to London; though the idea of entering it without a certain place to go to, was shocking to her imagination: yet she thought it a more secure place for her than any of the neighbouring cottages, which might be searched.—Mrs. Deborah, as she expected, soon came up to her. Amanda involuntarily shuddered at her appearance; but

but knowing her safety depended on the concealment of her feelings, she forced herself to converse with the treacherous creature. She at last arose from the bed, declaring she had indulged her languor too much; and after a few turns about the room, went to the window, and pretended to be engrossed in admiring the garden. "There is a great deal of fruit in the garden," said she, turning to Mrs. Deborah; "if I did not think it encroached too much on your kindness, I should ask you for a nectarine or two."—"Dear Ma'am," replied Mrs. Deborah, "you are heartily welcome. I declare I should have offered them to you, only I thought you would like a turn in the garden, and pull them yourself."—"No," said Amanda, "I cannot, at present."

Mrs. Deborah went off, and Amanda watched at the window till she saw her at the very end of the garden; she then snatched up her hat, and tied it on with her handkerchief, the better to conceal her face, then hastily descended the stairs, and locked the back-door, to prevent an immediate pursuit. She ran down the avenue, nor flagged in her course till she had got some paces from it; she was then compelled to do so, as much from weakness as from fear of attracting notice, if she went on in such a wild manner. She started at the sound of every carriage, and hastily averted her head as they passed; but she reached London without any alarm but what her own fears gave her.

The hour was now late and gloomy, and warned Amanda of the necessity there was for exertions to procure a lodging. Some poor women she saw retiring from their little fruit-stands, drew a shower of tears from her, to think her situation was more wretched than theirs, whom, but a few days before, she should have considered as objects of compassion. She knew, at such an hour, she could only be received into houses of an inferior description, and looked for one in which she could think there might be a chance of gaining admittance. She at last came to a small, mean-looking house: "This humble roof, I think," cried she, "will not disdain to shelter an unhappy wanderer."—She turned into the shop, where butter and cheese were displayed, and where an elderly woman sat knitting behind the counter. She arose immediately, as if from surprise and respect at Amanda's appearance, who, in universal agitation, leaned against the door for support, unable, for some minutes, to speak. At last, in faltering accents, whilst over her pale face a crimson blush was diffused, she said, "I should be glad to know if you have any lodgings to let."—The woman instantly dropped into her seat, and looking stedfastly at Amanda, "This is a strange hour," cried she, "for any decent body to come looking for lodgings."—"I am as sensible of that as you can be," said Amanda; "but peculiar circumstances have obliged me to it. If you can accommodate me, I can assure you, you will not have reason to repent

pent doing so."—"Oh! I do not know how that may be," cried she; "it is natural for a body to speak a good word for themselves. However, if I do let you a room, for I have only one to spare, I shall expect to be paid for it beforehand."—"You shall indeed," said Amanda.—"Well, I will shew it you," said she. She accordingly called a little girl to watch the shop, and taking a candle, went up, before Amanda, a narrow winding flight of stairs, and conducted her into a room, whose dirty miserable appearance made her involuntarily shrink back, as if from the den of wretchedness itself. She tried to subdue the disgust it inspired her with, by reflecting that, after the imminent danger she had escaped, she should be happy to procure any asylum she could consider safe; she also tried to reconcile herself to it, by reflecting that, in the morning, she could quit it.—"Well, Ma'am," said the woman, "the price of the room is neither more or less than one guinea per week; and if you do not like it, you are very welcome not to stay."—"I have no objection to the price," replied Amanda; "but I hope you have quiet people in the house."—"I flatter myself, Ma'am," said the woman, drawing up her head, "there is never a house in the parish can boast a better name than mine."—"I am glad to hear it," answered Amanda, "and I hope you are not offended by the inquiry."—She now put her hand in her pocket for the purse to give the expected guinea, but the purse was not there: she sat down on the side of

the bed, and searched the other, but with as little success: she pulled out the contents of both, but no purse was to be found. "Now, now!" cried she, clasping her hands together in an agony which precluded reflection, "now, now I am lost indeed!—My purse is stolen," she continued, "and I cannot give you the promised guinea."—"No, nor ever could, I suppose," exclaimed the woman. "Ah! I suspected all along what you were!—And so you was glad my house had a good name? I shall take care it does not lose that name by lodging you."—"I conjure you," cried Amanda, starting up, and laying her hand on the woman's, "I conjure you to let me stay this night; you will not, you shall not lose by doing so: I have things of value in a trunk in town, for which I will this instant give you a direction."—"Your trunk!" replied the woman, in a scornful tone; "oh yes! you have a trunk with things of value in it, as much as you have a purse in your pocket!—a pretty story indeed! But I know too much of the ways of the world to be deceived now-a-days: so march directly!"—Amanda again began to entreat, but the woman interrupted her, and declared, if she did not depart directly, she would be sorry for it.

Amanda instantly ceased her importunities, and in trembling silence followed her down stairs. Oppressed with weakness, she involuntarily hesitated in the shop, which the woman perceiving, she rudely seized her, and pushing her from it, shut the door.

—Amanda

—Amanda could not now, as in former exigencies, consider what was to be done; alas! if even capable of reflection, she could have suggested no plan which there was a hope of accomplishing: the powers of her mind were overwhelmed with horror and anguish. She moved mechanically along, nor stopped, till, from weakness, she sunk upon the step of a door, against which she leaned her head in a kind of lethargy; but from this she was suddenly roused by two men who stopped before her. Death alone could have conquered her terrors of Belgrave. She instantly concluded these to be him and his man. She started up, uttered a faint scream, and, calling upon Heaven to defend her, was springing past them, when her hand was suddenly caught. She made a feeble but unsuccessful effort to disengage it; and, overcome by terror and weakness, fell, though not fainting, unable to support herself, upon the bosom of him who had arrested her course.—"Gracious Heaven!" cried he, "I have heard that voice before!"—Amanda raised her head: "Sir Charles Bingley!" she exclaimed: the feelings of joy, surprise, and shame, that pervaded her whole soul, and thrilled through her frame, were, in its present weak state, too much for it, and she again sunk upon his shoulder. The joy of unexpected protection (for protection, she was convinced, she should receive from Sir Charles Bingley) was conquered, by reflecting on the injurious ideas her present situation must excite in his mind—ideas, she feared, she should never

never be able to remove, so strongly were appearances against her.—"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Sir Charles, "is this Miss Fitzalan? Oh! this," he cried, in a tone of deep dejection, "is indeed a meeting of horror!"—A deep convulsive sob from Amanda alone proclaimed her sensibility, for she lay motionless in his arms, arms which involuntarily encircled and enfolded her to a heart that throbbed with intolerable anguish on her account.

His friend stood all this time a silent spectator of the scene: the raillery which he had been on the point of uttering, at seeing Amanda, as he thought, so premeditately fall into the arms of his companion, was stopped by the sudden exclamation of Sir Charles: though the face of Amanda was concealed, the glimmering of a lamp over their heads gave him a view of her fine form, and the countenance of Sir Charles, as he bent over her, full of sorrow and dismay.

"Miss Fitzalan," cried Sir Charles, after the silence of a minute, "you are ill: allow me to have the pleasure of seeing you home."—"Home!" repeated Amanda, in the slow and hollow voice of despair, and raising her languid head; "alas! I have no home to go to!"

Every surmise of horror which Sir Charles had formed from seeing her in her present situation, was now confirmed: he groaned, he shuddered, and, scarcely able to stand, was obliged to lean with the lovely burthen he supported against the rails. He

besought

besought his friend either to procure a chair or coach, in which he might have her conveyed to a house where he knew he could gain her admittance. Touched by his distress, and the powerful impulse of humanity, his friend instantly went to comply with his request.

The silence of Amanda Sir Charles imputed to shame and illness, and grief and delicacy forbade him to notice it. His friend returned in a few minutes with a coach, and Sir Charles then found that Amanda's silence did not altogether proceed from the motives he had ascribed it to, for she had fainted on his bosom. She was lifted into the carriage, and he again received her in his arms. On the carriage stopping, he committed her to the care of his friend, while he stepped into the house to procure her a reception. In a few minutes he returned with a maid, who assisted him in carrying her up stairs; but, on entering the drawing-room, how great was his amazement, when a voice suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, merciful Powers! this is Miss Donald!"—It was indeed to Mrs. Connel's house, and to the care of the Rushbrooks, whom his bounty had released from prison, he had brought her. He had previously informed them of the situation in which he found her, little suspecting, at the time, she was the Miss Donald they mentioned being under such obligations to.—"It is I, it is I," cried Mrs. Rushbrook, gazing on her with mingled horror and anguish, "it is I have been the occasion of her distress, and never shall I forgive myself

myself for it!"—"Oh, my preserver! my friend! my benefactress!" said Emily, clasping her, in an agony of tears, to her bosom, "is it thus your Emily beholds you?"

Amanda was laid upon a couch, and her hat being removed, displayed a face which, with the paleness of death, had all the wildness of despair—a wildness that denoted, more expressively than language could have done, the conflicts her spirits had endured.—Heavy sighs announced her having recovered from her fainting fit; but her eyes still continued closed, and her head, too weak to be self-supported, rested against the arm of the couch. Mrs. Rushbrook and her daughter hung over her in inexpressible agonies: if they were affected thus, oh! how was Sir Charles Bingley distressed! Oh, how was that heart which loved her with the most impassioned tenderness, agonized!—As he bent over the couch, the big tear trickled down his manly cheek, and fell upon the cold pale face he contemplated. He softly asked himself, "Is this Amanda?—is this she whom, but a short time ago, I beheld moving with unequalled elegance, adorned with unrivalled beauty, whom my heart worshipped as the first of women, and sought to unite its destiny to, as the surest means of rendering that destiny happy?—Oh! what a change is here! How feeble is that form! how hollow is that cheek! how heavy are those eyes, whose languid glances speak incurable anguish of soul!—Oh, Amanda! was the being present who first led you into

into error, what horror and remorse must seize his soul, at seeing the consequence of that error!"

"Has this unhappy young creature," asked Rushbrook, who had approached the couch, and viewed her with the truest pity, "no connexions that could be prevailed on to save her?"—"None, that I know of," replied Sir Charles: "her parents are both dead."—"Happy are the parents," resumed Rushbrook, "who, shrouded in the dust, cannot see the misfortunes of their children—the fall of such a child as this!" glancing his tearful eyes, as he spoke, on his daughters.—"And pray, Sir," said Mrs. Connel, who was chafing her temples with lavender, "if she recovers, what is to become of her?"—"It shall be my care," cried Sir Charles, "to procure her an asylum. Yes, Amanda," he continued, looking at her with an expression of mingled tenderness and grief, "he that must for ever mourn thy fate, will try to mitigate it. But does she not want medical assistance?"—"I think not," replied Mrs. Connel; "it is want of nourishment and rest has thrown her into her present situation."—"Want of nourishment and rest!" repeated Sir Charles: "good Heavens!" continued he, in the sudden agony of his soul, and walking from the couch, "is it possible that Amanda was a wanderer in the streets, without food, or a place to lay her head in? Oh, this is dreadful!—Oh, my friends," he proceeded, looking around him, whilst his eyes beamed the divine compassion of his soul, "be kind, be careful of this poor

poor creature! But it is unnecessary to exhort you to this, and excuse me for having done so; yes, I know you will delight in binding up a broken heart, and drying the tears of a wretched outcast. A short time ago, and she appeared——" he stopped, overcome by his emotions, and turned away his head, to wipe away his tears—"A short time ago," he resumed, "and she appeared all that the heart of man could desire, all that a woman should wish and ought to be; now she is fallen indeed, lost to herself and to the world!"—"No," cried Emily, with generous warmth, starting from the side of the couch at which she had been kneeling, "I am confident she never was guilty of an error."—"I am inclined indeed to be of Emily's opinion," said Mrs. Rushbrook: "I think the monster who spread such a snare for her destruction, traduced Miss Donald, in order to drive her from those who would protect her from his schemes."—"Would to Heaven the truth of your conjecture could be proved!" exclaimed Sir Charles. — Again he approached the couch; Amanda remained in the same attitude; but, seeing her eyes open, he took her cold hand, and, in a soothing voice, assured her she was safe; but the assurance had no effect upon her; hers, like the dull cold ear of death, was insensible of sound; a faint spark of life seemed only quivering through her woe-worn frame.—"She is gone!" cried Sir Charles, pressing her hand between his; "she is gone indeed!—Oh, sweet Amanda! the mortal bounds that enclose

enclose thy afflicted spirit will soon be broken!"—"I trust not, Sir," exclaimed Captain Rushbrook (his wife and daughter were unable to speak): "in my opinion, she had better be removed to bed."

Amanda was accordingly removed to a chamber, and Sir Charles remained in the drawing-room till Mrs. Rushbrook had returned to it. She informed him Miss Donald continued in the same state. He desired a physician might be sent for, and departed in inexpressible dejection.

CHAP. VI.

Love, Gratitude, and Pity, wept at once. THOMSON.

WE shall now account for the incidents in the last chapter. Amanda's letter to the Rushbrooks filled them with surprise and consternation: Mrs. Rushbrook directly repaired to Mrs. Connel, who, without hesitation, gave it as her opinion, that the whole was a fabrication, invented by malice to ruin Sipthorpe in their opinion, or else by envy, to prevent their enjoying the good fortune which he offered to their acceptance. Mrs. Rushbrook was inclined to be of the same opinion; her mind was sensibly affected by the favours Sipthorpe had conferred on her family,

family, and, yielding to its gratitude, she resolved to be guided implicitly by her friend, who advised her to shew the letter to him. She considered this the best measure she could pursue; if innocent, he would be pleased by the confidence reposed in his honour; if guilty, his confusion must betray him. But Belgrave was guarded against detection: his servant had seen Amanda as she was alighting from the coach, the evening she arrived in town; he inquired from the maid concerning her, and learned that she was to lodge in the house, and go by her assumed name: these circumstances he related to his master the moment he returned home, who was transported at the intelligence. From her change of name, he supposed her not only in deep distress, but removed from the protection of her friends, and he determined not to lose so favourable an opportunity as the present for securing her in his power. He instantly resolved to relinquish his designs on Emily, designs which her beautiful simplicity and destitute condition had suggested, and to turn all his thoughts on Amanda, who had ever been the first object of his wishes: his pride, as well as love, was interested in again ensnaring her, as he had been deeply mortified by her so successfully baffling his former stratagems. He knew not of the manner she had left the house: half distracted at what he supposed her escape from it, he had followed her to Ireland, and remained *incognito* near the Convent, till the appearance of Lord Mortimer convinced him any schemes he formed

ed

ed against her must prove abortive. But, to concert a plan for securing her, required some deliberation: ere he could devise one, he was summoned to Mrs. Connel's parlour to peruse the letter, and from the hand, as well as purport, instantly knew Amanda to be its author. With the daring effrontery of vice, he directly declared she was a discarded mistress of his, who, from jealousy, had taken this step, to prevent, if possible, his union. He assured them her real name was not Donald; bade them tax her with that deceit, and judge, from her confusion, whether she was not guilty of that, as well as every thing else he alledged against her. His unembarrassed manner had the appearance of innocence to his too credulous auditors, prejudiced as they were already in his favour, and in their minds he was now fully acquitted of his imputed crimes: he was now careless whether Amanda saw him or not (for he had before stolen into the house), being well convinced nothing she could alledge against him would be credited.

When night approached without bringing her, he grew alarmed lest he had lost her again: at last her return relieved him from this fear. The conversation which passed in the parlour, he heard through the means of his servant, who had listened to it. The mention of Amanda's removal in the morning made him immediately consult his servant about measures for securing her; and he, with the assistance of the maid, contrived the scheme which has been already related, having forged a letter in Emily's name.

But

But how inadequate is language to describe the rage that took possession of his soul, when going, at the appointed hour, to carry Amanda off, he found her already gone! he raved, cursed, stamped, and accused the woman and his servant of being privy to her escape. In vain Mrs. Deborah told him of the trick she had played her, and how she had been obliged to get into the house through the window; he continued his accusations, which so provoked his servant, conscious of their unjustness, that he at last replied to them with insolence. This, in the present state of Belgrave's mind, was not to be borne; and he immediately struck him over the forehead with his sword, and with a violence which felled him to the earth. Scarcely had he obeyed, ere he repented, this impulse of passion, which seemed attended with fatal consequences, for the man gave no symptoms of existence. Consideration for his own safety was more prevalent in his mind than any feeling of humanity, and he instantly rushed from the house, ere the woman was sufficiently recovered from her horror and amazement, to be able to call to the other servants, as she afterwards did, to stop him. He fled to town, and hastened to an hotel in Pall Mall, from whence he determined to hire a carriage for Dover, and thence embark for the Continent. Ascending the stairs, he met a man, of all others he would have wished to avoid, namely, Sir Charles Bingley. He started, but it was too late to retreat. He then endeavoured to shake off his embarrassment,

barrassment, from a faint hope that Sir Charles had not heard of his villanous design upon Miss Rushbrook; but this hope vanished the moment Sir Charles addressed him, who, with coldness and contempt, said he would be glad to speak to him for a few minutes. But, ere we relate their conversation, it is necessary to relate a few particulars of the Rushbrooks.

Captain Rushbrook, from knowing more of the deceits of mankind than his wife, was less credulous: the more he reflected on the letter, the more he felt doubts obtruding on his mind; and he resolved sooner to forfeit the friendship of Sipthorpe, than permit any further intercourse between him and his daughter, till these doubts were removed. He sent his son to Sir Charles's agent, and had the satisfaction of hearing he was then in town, and lodged in an hotel in Pall Mall. He immediately wrote to Sir Charles, and requested to see him whenever he was at leisure; adding, he was well convinced his benevolence would excuse the liberty he had taken, when informed of the purpose for which his visit was requested. Sir Charles was fortunately within, and directly attended little Rushbrook to the prison. The letter had filled him with surprise, but that surprise gave way, the moment he entered the wretched apartment of Rushbrook, to the powerful emotions of pity: a scene more distressing he had never seen, or could not have conceived—he saw the emaciated form of the soldier, for such his dress announced him,

him, seated beside a dying fire, his little children surrounding him, whose faded countenances denoted their keen participation of his grief, and the sad partner of his misery bending her eyes upon those children, with mingled love and sorrow.

Rushbrook was unable to speak, for a few minutes after his entrance: when he recovered his voice, he thanked him for the kind attention he had paid his request, briefly informed him of the motives for that request, and ended by putting Amanda's letter into his hand. Sir Charles perused it with horror and amazement: "Gracious Heaven!" he exclaimed, "what a monster!—I know not the lady who has referred you to me, but I can testify the truth of her allegations. I am shocked to think such a monster as Belgrave exists."

Shocked at the idea of the destruction she was so near devoting her daughter to, disappointed in the hopes she entertained of having her family liberated from prison, and struck with remorse for her conduct to Amanda, Mrs. Rushbrook fell fainting to the floor, overpowered by her painful emotions. Sir Charles aided in raising her from it, for the trembling hand of Rushbrook refused its assistance. "Unhappy woman!" he exclaimed, "the disappointment of her hopes is too much for her feeble frame."—Water, the only restorative in the room, being sprinkled on her face, she slowly revived; and the first object she beheld was the pale and weeping Emily, whom her father had insisted on being

being brought to the prison: "Oh, my child!" she cried, clasping her to her bosom, "can you forgive the mother who was so near devoting you to destruction? Oh, my children! for your sakes, how near was I sacrificing this dear, this precious girl! I blush, I shudder, when I reflect on my conduct to the unhappy young creature, who, like a guardian angel, interposed between my child and ruin. But these dreary walls," she continued, bursting into an agony of tears, "which now we must never hope to pass, will hide my shame and sorrows together!"—"Do not despair, my dear Madam," said Sir Charles, in the soft accent of benevolence; "nor do you," continued he, turning to Rushbrook, "deem me impertinent in inquiring into those sorrows." His accent, his manner, were so soothing, that these children of misery, who had long been strangers to the voice of kindness, gave him, with tears and sighs, a short relation of their sorrows. He heard them with deep attention; and when he departed, gave them such a smile as we may suppose would beam from an angel, if sent by Heaven to pour the balm of comfort and mercy over the sorrows of a bursting heart.

He returned early in the morning. How bright, how animated was his countenance! Oh, ye sons of riot and extravagance, ye children of dissipation! never did ye experience a pleasure equal to his, when he entered the apartment of Rushbrook to inform him he was free! when, in the impassioned,

yet faltering, accents of sensibility, he communicated the joyful tidings, and heard the little children repeat his words, while their parents gazed on each other with surprise and rapture!

Rushbrook at length attempted to pour out the fulness of his heart, but Sir Charles stopped him. "Blessed with a fortune," cried he, "beyond my wants, to what nobler purpose could superfluous wealth be devoted, than to the enlargement of a man who has served his country, and who has a family which he may bring up to act as he has done? May the restoration of liberty be productive of every happiness! Your prison gates, I rejoice to repeat, are open! May the friendship which commenced within these walls be lasting as our lives!" To dwell longer on this subject is unnecessary. The transported family were conveyed to Mrs. Connel's, where he had been the preceding night to order every thing for their reception. He then inquired about Sipthorpe, or rather Belgrave, whom he meant to upbraid for his cruel designs against Miss Rushbrook; but Belgrave, as soon as his plan was settled about Amanda, had quitted Mrs. Connel's.

The joy of the Rushbrooks was greatly damped the next morning, on hearing of the secret departure of Amanda. What Belgrave had said against her they never would have credited, but for the appearance of mystery which enveloped her. Still her amiable attention to them merited their truest gratitude; they wished to have expressed that gratitude

to

to her, and offer her their services. Much as appearances were against Amanda, yet, from the very moment Mrs. Rushbrook declared it her idea that Belgrave had traduced her for the purpose of depriving her of protection, a similar idea started in Sir Charles's mind, and he resolved to seek Belgrave, and never rest till he had discovered whether there was any truth in his assertions against Amanda. Their meeting at the hotel was considered as fortunate as unexpected by him, yet he could not disguise for a moment the contempt his character inspired him with. He reproached him, as soon as they entered an apartment, for his base designs against Miss Rushbrook—designs in every respect degrading to his character, since he knew the blow he levelled at the peace of her father, could not, from the unfortunate situation of that father, be resented. "You are," continued Sir Charles, "not only the violator, but the defamer, of female innocence. I am well convinced, from reflection on past and present circumstances, that your allegations against Miss Fitzalan are as false as vile."—"You may doubt them, Sir Charles," replied Belgrave, "if it is agreeable to you; but yet, as a friend, I advise you not to let every one know you are her champion."—"Oh Belgrave!" cried Sir Charles, "can you think without remorse of having destroyed not only the reputation, but the existence, of an amiable young creature?"—"The existence!" repeated Belgrave, starting, and with a

kind of horror in his look, "what do you mean?" —"I mean, that Amanda Fitzalan, involved through your means in a variety of wretchedness she was unable to support, is now on her deathbed!" Belgrave changed colour, trembled, and, in an agitated voice, demanded an explanation of Sir Charles's words. Sir Charles saw his feelings were touched; and trusting they would produce the discovery he wished, briefly gave him the particulars he asked for.—Amanda was the only woman that had ever really touched the heart of Belgrave. His mind, filled with horror, and enervated with fear, at the idea of the crime he had recently committed, could make no opposition to the grief he experienced on hearing of her situation —a grief heightened almost to distraction, by reflecting that he was accessary to it. "Dying!" he repeated; "Amanda Fitzalan dying! But she will be happy; hers will be a pure and ministering spirit in Heaven, when mine lies howling—the angels are not purer in mind and person than she is."—"Then you are an execrable villain!" cried Sir Charles, laying his hand on his sword.—"Strike!" exclaimed Belgrave, with an air of wildness; "death will rid me of horrors! death from you will be better than the ignominious one which now stares me in the face; for I have, oh, horrible! this night I have committed murder!" Astonished and dismayed, Sir Charles gazed on him with earnestness. "It is true," continued he, in the same wild manner; "it is true; therefore strike! but against you I will not raise

raise my hand; it were impious to touch a life like yours, consecrated to the purposes of virtue—no, I would not deprive the wretched of their friend!"—Sir Charles, still shuddering at his words, demanded an explanation of them; and the tortured soul of Belgrave, as if happy to meet any one it could confide in, after a little hesitation, divulged at once its crimes and horrors. "No," cried Sir Charles, when he had concluded, "to raise a hand against him over whom the arm of Justice is uplifted, were cruel, as well as cowardly; go, then; and may repentance, not punishment, overtake you!"

To describe the raptures Sir Charles experienced at the acquittal of Amanda, is impossible; not a fond father, rejoicing over the restored fame of a darling child, could experience more exquisite delight. The next morning, as soon as he thought it possible he could gain admittance, he hastened to Mrs. Connel's; and had the satisfaction of hearing from Mrs. Rushbrook that Amanda was then in a sweet sleep, from which the most salutary consequences might be expected. With almost trembling impatience, he communicated the transports of his heart, and his auditors rejoiced as much at these transports on Amanda's account as on his.

Mrs. Rushbrook and Emily had sat up with her the preceding night, which she passed, in a most restless manner, without any perception of surrounding objects: towards morning she fell into a profound sleep, which they trusted would recruit

her exhausted frame. Mrs. Rushbrook then withdrew to her husband. It was past noon ere Amanda awoke. At first a pleasing languor was diffused through her frame, which prevented her from having an idea of her situation; but gradually her recollection returned, and with it anxiety to know where she was. She remembered to the moment she had met Sir Charles, but no further. She gently opened the curtain, and beheld (oh, how great the pleasure of that moment!) Emily sitting by the bedside, who, instantly rising, kissed her cheek in a transport of affection, and inquired how she did. Oh, how delightful, how soothing, was that gentle voice to the ears of Amanda! the softest music could not have been more grateful: her heart vibrated to it with an exquisite degree of pleasure; and her eyes feasted on the rays of benevolence which streamed from those of Emily's. At last, in a faint voice, she said, "I am sure I am safe, since I am with Emily."

Mrs. Rushbrook entered at that instant; her delight at the restored faculties of Amanda was equal to her daughter's; yet the recollection of her own conduct made her almost reluctant to approach her. At last advancing, "I blush, yet I rejoice, oh, how truly rejoice! to behold you," she exclaimed: "that I could be tempted to harbour a doubt against you, fills me with regret; and the vindication of your innocence can scarcely yield you more pleasure than it does me."—"The vindication of my innocence!"

cence!" repeated Amanda, raising her head from the pillow; "oh, gracious Heaven! is it then vindicated? Tell me, I conjure you, how, and by what means?" Mrs. Rushbrook hastened to obey her, and related all she had heard from Sir Charles. The restoration of her fame seemed to reanimate the soul of Amanda; yet tears burst from her, and she trembled with emotion. Mrs. Rushbrook was alarmed, and endeavoured to compose her. "Do not be uneasy," said Amanda; "those tears will never injure me: it is long, it is very long since I have shed tears of joy." She implored Heaven's choicest blessings on Sir Charles, for his generosity to her, and his benevolence to the Rushbrooks.

Her heart, relieved of a heavy burthen of anxiety on her own account, now grew more anxious than ever to learn something of her poor Oscar; and, notwithstanding Mrs. Rushbrook's entreaties to the contrary, who feared she was exerting herself beyond her strength, she arose in the afternoon, for the purpose of going to the drawing-room, determined, as Sir Charles's generous conduct merited her confidence, to relate to him, as well as to Mrs. Rushbrook, the motives which had brought her to town, the particulars of her life necessary to be known, and to request their assistance in trying to learn intelligence of her brother. Emily helped her to dress, and supported her to the drawing-room. Sir Charles had continued in the house the whole day; and met her, as she entered, with mingled love

and pity; for, in her feeble form, her faded cheek, he witnessed the ravages of grief and sickness: his eyes, more than his tongue, expressed his feelings; yet, in the softest accent of tenderness, did he pour forth those feelings, whilst his hand trembled as it pressed hers to his bosom. "My feelings, Sir Charles," said she, "cannot be expressed; but my gratitude to you will cease but with my existence." Sir Charles besought her to be silent on such a subject; he was selfish, he said, in every thing he did for her, for on her happiness his depended.

Rushbrook approached to offer his congratulations; he spoke of her kindness: but, like Sir Charles, the subject was painful to her, and dropped at her request. The idea of being safe, the soothing attentions she experienced, gave to her mind a tranquillity it had long been a stranger to; and she looked back on her past dangers but to enjoy more truly her present security. As she witnessed the happiness of the Rushbrooks, she could scarcely forbear applauding aloud the author of that happiness; but she judged of his heart by her own, and therefore checked herself, by believing he would prefer the silent plaudits of that heart to any praise whatsoever.

After tea, when only Sir Charles, Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook, and Emily, were present, she entered upon the affairs she wished to communicate. They heard her with deep attention, wonder, and pity; and when she concluded, both Sir Charles and Rushbrook

brook declared their readiness to serve her. The latter, who had betrayed strong emotions during her narrative, assured her, he doubted not—nay, he was almost convinced, he should soon be able to procure her intelligence of her brother. This was a sweet assurance to the heart of Amanda; and cheered by it, she soon retired to bed: her strength being exhausted by speaking, she sunk into a tranquil slumber; and next morning she arose for breakfast. "Well," said Rushbrook to her, as they sat at it, "I told you last night I should soon be able to procure you intelligence of your brother, and I was not mistaken."—"Oh Heavens!" cried Amanda, in trembling emotion; "have you really heard any thing of him?"—"Be composed, my dear girl," said he, taking her hand, in the most soothing, most affectionate manner, "I have heard of him, but ——" "But what?" interrupted Amanda, with increased emotion.—"Why, that he has experienced some of the trials of life: but let the reflection that these trials are over, prevent your suffering pain by hearing of them."—"Oh, tell me, I entreat," said Amanda, "where he is? tell me, I conjure you, shall I see him?"—"Yes," replied Rushbrook, "you shall see him: to keep you no longer in suspense—in that dreary prison from which I have been just released, he has languished for many months."—"Oh, my brother!" exclaimed Amanda, while tears gushed from her.—"I knew not," continued Rushbrook, "from the conceal-

ment of your name, that he was your brother, till last night. I then told Sir Charles, and he is gone this morning to him; but you must expect to see him somewhat altered. The restoration of liberty, and the possession of fortune, will, no doubt, soon re-establish his health. Hark! I think I hear a voice on the stairs." Amanda started, arose, attempted to move, but sunk again upon her chair. The door opened, and Sir Charles entered, followed by Oscar!

Though prepared for an alteration in his looks, she was not by any means prepared for the alteration which struck her the moment she beheld him, pale and thin, even to a degree of emaciation. He was dressed, or rather wrapped, in an old regimental great-coat; his fine hair wildly dishevelled. As he approached her, Amanda arose. "Amanda, my sister!" said he, in a faint voice. She tottered forward; and falling upon his bosom, gave way, in tears, to the mingled joy and anguish of the moment. Oscar pressed her to his heart. He gazed on her with the fondest rapture; yet a rapture suddenly checked by surveying the alteration in her appearance, which was as striking to him as his was to her. Her pale and woe-worn countenance, her sable dress, at once declared her sufferings, and brought most painfully to recollection the irreparable loss they had sustained since their last meeting. "Oh, my father!" groaned Oscar, unable to control the strong emotions of his

his mind; "oh, my father! when we last met we were blessed with your presence!" He clasped Amanda closer to his heart as he spoke, as if doubly endeared to him by her desolate situation.—"To avoid regretting him is, indeed, impossible," said Amanda; "yet, had he lived, what tortures would have wrung his heart, in witnessing the unhappiness of his children, when he had not the power of removing it!"—"Come," cried Captain Rushbrook, whose eyes, like those of every person present, confessed his sympathetic feelings, "let us not cloud present blessings by the retrospection of past misfortunes. In this life we must all expect to meet with such losses as you lament."

As soon as Oscar and Amanda grew composed, they were left to themselves; and Oscar then satisfied the anxious and impatient heart of his sister, by informing her of all that had befallen him. He began with his attachment for Adela, and the disappointment of that attachment; but as this part of his story is already known, we shall pass it over in silence, and merely relate the occasion of his quarrel with Belgrave.

CHAP. VII.

But thou, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit should lament thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say—
"Oft have I seen him at the peep of dawn,
"Brushing with hasty steps the dew away,
"To meet the sun upon the upland lawn."

"I LEFT Enniskillen," said Oscar, "in the utmost distress of mind, for I left it with the idea that I might no more behold Adela; yet, dear and precious as her sight was to my soul, I rejoiced she had not accompanied the regiment, since to have beheld her but as the wife of Belgrave, would have been insupportable. Had the disappointment of my passion been occasioned by its not meeting a return, pride would have assisted me to conquer it; but to know it was tenderly returned, at once cherished, and if possible, increased it. The idea of the happiness I might have attained, rendered me insensible of any I might still have enjoyed. I performed the duties of my situation mechanically, and shunned society as much

much as possible, unable to bear the raillery of my gay companions on my melancholy.

"The summer you came to Ireland, the regiment removed to Bray, whose romantic situation allowed me to enjoy many delightful and solitary rambles. It was there a man enlisted, whose manner and appearance were, for many days, subjects of surprise and conversation to us all; from both it was obvious he had been accustomed to one of the superior situations in life—a form more strikingly elegant I never beheld. The officers made many attempts to try and discover who he really was; but he evaded all their inquiries, yet with the utmost agitation. What rendered him, if possible, more interesting, was his being accompanied by a young and lovely woman, who, like him, appeared sunk beneath her original state: but to their present one both conformed, if not with cheerfulness, at least with resignation.

"Mary obtained work from almost all the officers, Henry was diligent in his duties, and both were universally admired and respected. Often, in my lonely rambles, have I surprised this unfortunate pair; who, it was evident, like me, sought solitude for the indulgence of sorrow, weeping together, as if over the remembrance of happier hours. Often have I beheld them gazing, with mingled agony and tenderness, on the infant, which Mary nursed, as if shuddering at the idea of its destiny.

"The loveliness of Mary was too striking not to attract

attract the notice of Belgrave; and from her situation, he flattered himself she would be an easy prey; he was however mistaken: she repulsed his overtures with equal abhorrence and indignation. She wished to conceal them from her husband; but he heard of them through the means of his fellow-soldiers, who had several times seen the Colonel following his wife. It was then he really felt the bitterness of a servile situation. Of his wife he had no doubt; she had already given him a convincing proof of constancy; but he dreaded the insults she might receive from the Colonel. The united vigilance of both prevented, however, for some time, a repetition of those insults. Exasperated by their vigilance, the Colonel at last concerted one of the most diabolical plans which could have entered into the heart of man: a party of the soldiers were ordered to the sea-side, to watch there for smuggled goods; Henry was named to be of the party; but when the soldiers were drawn out, he was not to be found. Belgrave's servant, the vile agent of his master, had informed him that the Colonel meant to take advantage of his absence, and visit his wife. He, trembling for her safety, resolved to run every risk, sooner than leave her unguarded, and accordingly absconded till the departure of the party. The consequence of this was, that, on his re-appearance, he was put under an arrest for disobedience of orders, tried the next day, and sentenced to be flogged on the following one. The very officers

ficers that passed the sentence regretted it, but the strictness of military discipline rendered it unavoidable.

"I shall not attempt to describe the situation of the unhappy young couple; they felt for each other more than for themselves, and pride heightened the agonies of Henry.

"Pale, weeping, with a distracted air, Mary flew to my apartment, and sinking at my feet, with uplifted hands, besought me to interpose in favour of her husband. I raised the poor mourner from the ground, and assured her, yet with a sigh from the fear of proving unsuccessful, that I would do all in my power to save him. I therefore hastened to the Colonel, to ask for another that favour I should have disdained to desire for myself; but to serve this wretched couple, I felt I could almost have humbled myself to the earth.

"The Colonel was on the parade, and, as if aware of my intention, appeared sedulous to avoid me; but I would not be repulsed by this, and followed him, entreating his attention for a few minutes.

'Dispatch your business then in haste, Sir,' said he, with an air of unusual haughtiness.—'I shall, Sir,' cried I, endeavouring to repress the indignation his manner excited; 'and I also hope with success.'—'What is your business, Sir?" demanded he. —''Tis the business of humanity,' I replied; 'and 'tis only for others I could ask a favour.'—I then proceeded to mention it. Rage and malice inflamed his

his countenance as I spoke. 'Never,' exclaimed he, 'shall the wretch receive pardon from me; and I am astonished at your presumption in asking it.'—'Yet not half so astonished,' replied I, 'as I am at your obduracy. Though why do I say so? from your past actions, I should not be surprised at any act you may commit.' His passion grew almost to frenzy. He asked me if I knew who I was addressing. 'Too well,' I replied; 'I know I am addressing one of the completest villains upon earth.' He raised a small rattan he held at these words in a threatening manner. I could no longer suppress my indignation; I rushed upon him, wrested it from his hand, broke it, and flung it over his head. 'Now,' cried I, laying my hand upon my sword, 'I am ready to give you the satisfaction you may desire for my words, words whose truth I will uphold with my life.'—'No,' said he, with the coolness of deliberate malice, 'tis a far different satisfaction I shall expect to receive.' Some of the officers had by this time gathered round us, and attempted to interfere; but he commanded their silence in a haughty manner, and ordered me under an immediate arrest. My fate I then knew decided; but I resolved to bear that fate with fortitude, nor let him triumph in every respect over me. I was confined to my room, and Henry the next morning was brought forth to receive his punishment.

"I will not, my sister, pain your gentle heart by describing to you, as it was decribed to me by

an

an officer, his parting from his wife; pride, indignation, tenderness, and pity, were struggling in his heart, and visible in his countenance. He attempted to assume composure; but when he reached the destined spot, he could no longer controul his feelings: the idea of being exposed, disgraced, was too much for his noble soul; the paleness of his face increased, he tottered, fell into the arms of a soldier, and expired, groaning forth the name of Mary!

"Four days after this melancholy event, a court-martial was held on me; when, as I expected, I was broke for contempt to my superior officer. I retired to a solitary inn, near Bray, in a state of mind which baffles description, destitute of friends and fortune. I felt, in that moment, as if I had no business in the world.

"I was followed to the inn by a young Lieutenant, with whom I had been on an intimate footing. The grief he expressed at my situation roused me from almost a stupefaction that was stealing on me. The voice of friendship will penetrate the deepest gloom, and I felt my sorrows gradually allayed by it. He asked me, had I fixed on any plan for myself? I replied I had not, for it was vain to fix on plans when there were no friends to support them. He took my hand, and told me I was mistaken; in a few days he trusted to procure me letters to a gentleman in London, who had considerable possessions in the West Indies, if such a thing was agreeable to me.

me. It was just what I wished for, and I thanked him with the sincerest gratitude.

"In the evening, I received a message from the unfortunate Mary, requesting to see me directly: the soldier who brought it said she was dying. I hastened to her; she was in bed, supported by a soldier's wife. The declining sunbeams stole into the apartment, and shed a kind of solemn glory round her. The beauty that had caused her misfortunes was faded, but she looked more interesting than when in all its bloom. Sighs and tears impeded her words for some minutes after I approached her; at last, in a faint voice, she said, 'I sent for you, Sir, because I knew your goodness, your benevolence would excuse the liberty. I knew you would think *that* no trouble which could sooth the last sad moments of a wretched woman!'

"She then proceeded to inform me of the motives which made her send, namely, to convey her infant to her father, a person of fortune in Dublin; and to see her remains, ere I did so, laid by those of her husband. Her unfortunate Henry, she added, had been son to a respectable merchant: their families were intimate; and an attachment, which commenced at an early period, between them, was encouraged. Henry's father experienced a sudden reverse of fortune; and hers, in consequence of it, forbade their ever thinking more of each other; but they could not obey his commands, and married clandestinely; thus

thus forfeiting the favour of all their friends, as Henry's thought he wanted spirit, and hers deemed her deficient in respect to her father; they were therefore compelled, by necessity, to a state of life infinitely beneath them. 'But in my grave,' continued she, 'I trust my father will bury all his resentment, and protect this little orphan.' I promised a religious observance to her commands, and she expired in about an hour after I quitted her. Mournful were the tasks she enjoined me. I attended her remains to the grave, and then conveyed her child to Dublin.

"Startled, amazed, distressed, her father too late regretted his rigour, and received her infant to his arms with a flood of repentant tears.

"I now procured my recommendatory letters, and sailed for England, having first written farewell ones to my father and Mrs. Marlowe, in which I informed both I was about quitting the kingdom. As soon as I had procured cheap lodgings in London, I repaired to the gentleman to whom I was recommended; but conceive my consternation when I heard he was himself gone to the West Indies. I turned into a coffee-house, with an intention of communicating this intelligence to my friend. While the waiter was getting the materials for writing, I took up a newspaper, and cast my eyes carelessly over it. Oh, my Amanda, what was the shock of that moment when I read my father's death! Grief for him, anxiety for you, both assailed

sailed my heart too powerfully for its feelings; my head grew giddy, my sight failed me, and I fell back with a deep groan. When recovered by the assistance of some gentlemen, I requested a carriage might be sent for; but I was too weak to walk to it. On returning to my lodgings, I was compelled to go to bed, from which I never rose for a fortnight. During my illness, all the little money I had brought along with me was expended, and I was besides considerably in debt with the people of the house for procuring me necessaries. When able to sit up, they furnished their accounts, and I candidly told them my inability to discharge them: in consequence of this, I was arrested, and not suffered to take my clothes, only a change or two of linen. The horrors of what I imagined would be a lasting captivity, were heightened by reflecting on your unprotected situation. A thousand times was I on the point of writing to inquire into that situation; but still checked myself, by reflecting, that, as I could not aid you, I should only add to any griefs you might be oppressed with, by acquainting you of mine. The company of Captain Rushbrook alleviated, in some degree, the dreariness of my time. I knew I should sustain an irreparable loss in losing him; but I should have detested myself, if any selfish motives had prevented my rejoicing at his enlargement. Oh, little did I think his liberation was leading the way to mine! Early this morning he returned, and introduced Sir Charles Bingley to me. Gently, and by degrees,

they

they broke the joyful intelligence they had to communicate. With truth I can aver, that the announcement of a splendid fortune was not so pleasing to my heart as the mention of my sister's safety. Of my poor Adela I know nothing since my confinement; but I shudder to think of what she may have suffered from being left solely in the power of such a man as Belgrave, for the good old General died soon after I left Enniskillen. 'Regret not too bitterly, my dear Oscar,' said Mrs. Marlowe, in one of her letters, 'the good man's death; rather rejoice he was removed ere his last hours were embittered by the knowledge of his darling child's unhappiness.' "Oh, my sister!" continued Oscar, with a heavy sigh, while tears fell from him, and mingled with those Amanda was shedding, "in this world we must have still something to wish and sigh for."

Oscar here concluded his narrative, with such an expression of melancholy as gave to Amanda the sad idea of his passion for Adela being incurable. This was indeed the case; neither reason, time, nor absence, could remove or lessen it, and the acquisition of liberty or fortune lost half their value by his still brooding over her loss.

When their friends returned to the drawing-room, and again offered their congratulations, Oscar's dejection would not permit him to reply to them. When Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook spoke of the happiness he might now enjoy, he listened to their recapitulation of it as to a fulsome tale, to which his heart

heart in secret gave the lie. An innate sense of piety, however, recalled him to a proper recollection of the blessings so unexpectedly declared to be his; he accused himself of ingratitude to Heaven in yielding to murmurs, after so astonishing a reverse in his situation. Perfect happiness he had been early taught, and daily experience confirmed the truth of the remark, was rarely to be met with; how presumptuous in him, therefore, to repine at the common lot of humanity! To be independent, to have the means of returning the obligations Sir Charles Bingley had conferred upon him, to be able to comfort and provide for his lovely and long-afflicted sister, and to distribute relief amongst the children of indigence, were all blessings which would shortly be his—blessings which demanded his warmest gratitude, and for which he now raised his heart with thankfulness to their divine Dispenser. His feelings grew composed, a kind of soft and serene melancholy stole over his mind. He still thought of Adela, but not with that kind of distracting anguish he had so recently experienced; it was with that kind of tender regret which a soul of sensibility feels when reflecting on a departed friend, and to him Adela was as much lost as if already shrouded in her native clay. "Yes, my love," he said, as if her gentle spirit had already forsaken its earthly mansion, "in that happy world we shall be reunited, which only can reward thy goodness and thy sufferings!"

He could now enter into conversation with his friends

friends about the measures which should be taken to forward his pretensions. It was the opinion of Captain Rushbrook and Sir Charles, that to make known his claim to the Marquis of Rosline was all that was necessary—a claim which they did not imagine he would or could dispute, when such proofs of its validity as the testimony of Lady Dunreath and the will could be produced: was it disputed, it was then time enough to apply elsewhere for justice.

Sir Charles knew the Marquis personally, and was also well acquainted in his neighbourhood, and declared he would accompany Oscar to Scotland. Oscar thanked him for his intention; the support of a person so well known, and universally esteemed, he was convinced would essentially serve him.

Sir Charles said, regimental business required his presence in Ireland, which, however, would occasion no great delay, as he should have it transacted in a few days: and as his regiment lay near Donaghadee, they could cross over to Port Patrick, and in a few hours after reach the Marquis of Rosline's Castle. The day after the next he had fixed for commencing his journey, and he asked Oscar if it would be agreeable and convenient to accompany him then. Oscar instantly assured him it was both.

Amanda's heart fluttered at the idea of a journey to Ireland; it was probable, she thought, that they would take Wales in their way; and her soul seemed already on the wing to accompany them thither, and be left at the cottage of nurse Edwin, from whence

she

she could again wander through the shades of Tudor Hall, and take a last, a sad farewell of them; for she solemnly determined, from the moment she should be apprised of Lord Mortimer's return to England, to visit them no more: in such a farewell, she believed she should find a melancholy consolation that would sooth her spirits. She imagined there was no necessity for accompanying her brother into Scotland; and, except told there was an absolute one, she determined to decline the journey, if she should be asked to undertake it. To go to the very spot where she would hear particulars of Lord Mortimer's nuptials, she felt would be too much for her fortitude; and might betray to her brother a secret she had resolved carefully to conceal from him, as she well knew the pain he would feel from knowing that the pangs of a hopeless attachment were entailed upon her, and would defeat whatever flattering hopes he entertained for her. Exclusive of the above-mentioned objections, she could not bear to go to a place where she might perhaps witness the pain which Lord Mortimer must unavoidably feel, from having any disgrace befall a family he was so nearly connected with. Oh, how her heart swelled at the idea, that, ere Oscar reached Scotland, the interest of the Marquis of Rosline and Lord Mortimer would be but one! From her apprehensions of being asked to take a journey so truly repugnant to her feelings, she was soon relieved, by Oscar's declaring, that, except she wished it, he would not

ask

ask her to take so fatiguing a one, particularly as her presence he could not think at all necessary. Sir Charles Bingley assured him it was not; though, in a low voice, he said to her, it was against his own interest he spoke.

She would have mentioned her wish of going to Wales, had not a certain consciousness checked her: she feared her countenance would betray her motives for such a wish. While she hesitated about mentioning it, Sir Charles Bingley told Captain Rushbrook that he had applied to a friend of his in power for a place for him, and had been fortunate enough to make application at the very time there was one, of tolerable emolument, vacant at ———, about seventy miles distant from London, whither it would be necessary he should go as soon as possible: he therefore proposed, that he and Mrs. Rushbrook should begin preparations for their journey the ensuing morning, and exert themselves to be able to undertake it in the course of the week.

They were all rapture and gratitude at this intelligence, which opened a prospect of support through their own means; as the bread of independence, however hardly earned, which here was not the case, must ever be sweet to souls of sensibility.

Oscar looked with anxiety at his sister, on the mention of the Rushbrooks removal from town, as if to say, to whose care then can I entrust you? Mrs. Rushbrook interpreted his look, and instantly requested that Miss Fitzalan might accompany them,

declaring her society would render their felicity complete. This was the moment for Amanda to speak. She took courage, and mentioned her earnest wish of visiting her faithful nurse, declaring she could not lose so favourable an opportunity as now offered for the gratification of that wish, by accompanying her brother into Wales. Emily pleaded; but Amanda, though with the utmost gratitude and tenderness, as if to soften her refusal, was steady. Oscar was pleased with his sister's determination, as he trusted going into what might be called her native air, joined to the tender care of nurse Edwin, would recruit her health.

Sir Charles was in raptures at the idea of having her company so far on their way.

Every thing relative to the proceedings of the whole party was arranged before dinner, at which Sir Charles presided, giving pleasure to all around him by the ineffable sweetness of his manners. He withdrew at an early hour at night, and his friends soon after retired to their respective chambers. On entering the breakfast-room next morning, Amanda found not only her brother and the Rushbrooks, but Sir Charles Bingley, there. Immediately after breakfast, he drew Oscar aside, and, in the most delicate terms, insisted on being his banker at present; to which Oscar gratefully consented. As soon as this affair was settled, he put a note into his sister's hands, to purchase whatever she should deem necessary: and she went out with the Rushbrooks,

brooks, who, according to Sir Charles's directions, began preparations for their journey this day. After their return, Sir Charles found an opportunity of again making an offer of his hand to Amanda. The sincere friendship she had conceived for him, made her determine to terminate his suspense on her account. "Were I to accept your generous proposal, Sir Charles," said she, "I should be unworthy of that esteem, which it will be my pride to retain, and my pleasure to return, because beyond esteem I cannot go myself. It is due to your friendship," cried she, after the hesitation of a moment, whilst a rosy blush stole over her lovely face, and as quickly faded from it, "to declare, that, ere I saw you, the fate of my heart was decided."—Sir Charles turned pale; he grasped her hands in a kind of silent agony to his bosom; then exclaimed, "I will not, Miss Fitzalan, after your generous confidence, teaze you with further importunity."

CHAP. VIII.

——— I solitary court
The inspiring breeze. THOMSON.

THE ensuing morning, Oscar, Amanda, and Sir Charles, began their journey. The Rushbrooks, who regarded Amanda as the cause of their present happiness, took leave of her with a tender sorrow that deeply affected her heart. The journey to Wales was pleasant and expeditious, the weather being fine, and relays of horses being provided at every stage. On the evening of the third day they arrived about sunset at the village which lay contiguous to Edwin's abode; from whence, as soon as they had taken some refreshment, Amanda set off, attended by her brother, for the cottage, having ordered her luggage to be brought after her. She would not permit the attendance of Sir Charles, and almost regretted having travelled with him, as she could not help thinking his passion seemed increased by her having done so. "How dearly," cried he, as he handed her down stairs, "shall I pay for a few short hours of pleasure, by the increasing regret their remembrance will entail upon me!"

Amanda

Amanda withdrew her hand; and bidding him farewell, hurried on.

Oscar proceeded no further than the lane which led to the cottage with his sister. He had no time to answer the interrogations which its inhabitants might deem themselves privileged to make, neither did he wish his present situation to be known to any others than those already acquainted with it. Amanda therefore meant to say she had taken the opportunity of travelling so far with two particular friends, who were going to Ireland. Oscar promised to write to her immediately from thence, and from Scotland as soon as he had seen the Marquis. He gave her a thousand charges concerning her health, and took a tender farewell. From his too visible dejection, Amanda rejoiced she had not revealed her own sorrows to him: she trusted it would be in her power, by soothing attentions, by the thousand little nameless offices of friendship, to alleviate his; to pluck the thorn from his heart, which rankled within it, was beyond her hopes; in their dispositions, as well as fates, there was too great a similitude to expect this.

Amanda lingered in the walk as he departed. She was now in the very spot that recalled a thousand fond and tender remembrances—it was here she had given a farewell look to Tudor Hall—it was here her father had taken a last look at the spire of the church where his beloved wife was interred—it was here Lord Mortimer used so often to meet her. Her

soul sunk in the heaviest sadness; sighs burst from her overcharged heart, and with difficulty she prevented her tears from falling. All around was serene and beautiful, but neither the serenity nor the beauty of the scene could she now enjoy: the plaintive bleating of the cattle, that rambled about the adjacent hills, only heightened her melancholy; and the appearance of autumn, which was now far advanced, only made her look back to the happy period when admiring its luxuriance had given her delight. The parting sunbeams yet glittered on the windows of Tudor Hall; she paused involuntarily to contemplate it; hours could she have continued in the same situation, had not the idea that she might be observed from the cottage made her at last hasten to it.

The door lay open; she entered, and found only the nurse within, employed at knitting. Her astonishment at the appearance of Amanda is not to be described: she started, screamed, surveyed her a minute, as if doubting the evidence of her eyes; then running to her, flung her arms about her neck, and clasped her to her bosom:—"Good gracious!" cried she; "well, to pe sure, who ever would have thought such a thing! well, to pe sure, you are as welcome as the flowers in May. Here we have been in such a peck of troubles about you; many and many a time has my goodman said, that, if he knew where you were, he would go to you." Amanda returned the embraces of her faithful nurse,

and

and they both sat down together. "Ah! I fear," said the nurse, looking tenderly at her for a few minutes, "you have been in a sad way since I last saw you. The poor tear Captain, alack! little did I think, when he took you away from us, I should never see him more!" Amanda's tears could no longer be suppressed—they gushed in torrents from her; and deep sobs spoke the bitterness of her feelings. "Aye," said the nurse, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron, "gentle or simple, sooner or later, we must all go the same way; so, my tear childt, don't take it so much to heart. Well, to pe sure, long pefore this I thought I should have seen or heard of your being greatly married! put I pelieve it is true enough, that men are like the wind, always changing. Any one that had seen Lord Mortimer after you went away, would never have thought he could prove fickle: he was in such grief, my very heart and soul pitied him; to pe sure, if I had known where you were, I should have told him. I comforted myself, however, by thinking he would find you out; when, Lort! instead of looking for you, here hur's going to pe married to a great lady, with such a long hard name, a Scotch heiress, I think, they call her—aye, golt is every thing in these days. Well, all the harm I wish him is, that she may plague his life out." This discourse was too painful to Amanda; her tears had subsided, and she endeavoured to change it, by asking after the nurse's family. The

nurse, in a hasty manner, said they were well, and thus proceeded: "Then there is Parson Howell; I am sure one would have thought him as steady as Penmaenmawr; but no such thing—I am sure he has changed, for he does not come to the cottage half so often to ask about you as he used to do." Amanda, notwithstanding her dejection, smiled at the nurse's anger about the Curate, and again requested to hear particulars of her family. The nurse no longer hesitated to comply with the request. She informed her they were all well, and then at a little dance at the mill in the valley. She also added, that Ellen was married to her faithful Chip, had a comfortable cottage, and a fine little girl she was nursing; and to whom, from her love to her tear young laty, she would have given the name of Amanda, but that she feared people would deem her conceited to give it so fine a one. The nurse said, she often regretted having left her young laty, and then even Chip himself could not console her for having done so. Tears again started to Amanda's eyes, at hearing of the unabated attachment of her poor Ellen: she longed to see and congratulate her on her present happiness. The nurse, in her turn, inquired of all that had befallen Amanda since their separation, and shed tears at hearing of her dear child's sufferings since that period. She asked about Oscar, and was briefly informed he was well.

The family soon returned from the dance; and it would

would be difficult to say whether surprise or joy was most predominant at seeing Amanda. One of the young men ran over for Ellen, and returned in a few minutes with her, followed by her husband, carrying his little child. She looked wild with delight; she clasped Amanda in her arms, as if she would never let her depart from them, and wept in the fulness of her heart. "Now, now," cried she, "I shall be quite happy. But oh! why, my dear young laty, did you not come amongst us before? you know all in our power we would have done to render you happy." She now recollected herself, and modestly retired to a little distance. She took her child, and brought it to Amanda, who delighted her extremely by the notice she took of it and Chip.

If Amanda had had less cause for grief, the attentions of these affectionate cottagers would have soothed her mind; but at present nothing could diminish her dejection. Her luggage was by this time arrived; she had brought presents for all the family, and now distributed them. She tried to converse about their domestic affairs, but found herself unequal to the effort; and begged to be shewn to her chamber. The nurse would not suffer her to retire to it till she had tasted her new cheese and Welch ale. When alone within it, she found fresh objects to remind her of Lord Mortimer, and consequently to augment her grief. Here lay the bookcase he had sent her. She opened it with trembling impatience; but scarcely a volume did she examine in which

select passages were not marked, by his hand, for her particular perusal. Oh! what mementoes were those volumes of the happy hours she had passed at the cottage! the night waned away, and still she continued weeping over them. She could with difficulty bring herself to close the bookcase; and when she retired to rest, her slumbers were short and unrefreshing.

The next morning, as she sat at breakfast, assiduously attended by the nurse and her daughter (for Ellen had come over early to inquire after her health), Howell entered to pay her a visit: the previous intimation she had received of the alteration in his sentiments, rendered his visit more pleasing than it would otherwise have been to her. His pleasure was great at seeing her; but it was not the wild and extravagant delight of a lover, but the soft and placid joy of a friend. After his departure, which was not soon, she accompanied Ellen to view her cottage, and was infinitely pleased by its neatness and romantic situation—it lay on the side of a hill, which commanded a beautiful prospect of Tudor Hall. Every thing she beheld reminded Amanda of Lord Mortimer, even the balmy air she breathed, on which his voice had so often floated.

The sad indulgence of wandering through the shades of Tudor Hall, which she had so eagerly desired, and fondly anticipated, she could not long deny herself. The second evening after her arrival at the cottage, she turned her solitary steps to them; their

their deep embowered glens, their solitude, their silence, suited the pensive turn of her feelings. Here, undisturbed and unobserved, she could indulge the sorrows of her heart; and, oh, how did recollection augment those sorrows, by retracing the happy hours she had spent within those shades! A cold, a deadlike melancholy pervaded her feelings, and seemed repelling the movements of life. Her trembling limbs were unable to support her, and she threw herself on the ground. For some minutes she could scarcely breathe: tears, at length, relieved her painful oppression; she raised her languid head, she looked around, and wept, with increasing violence, at beholding what might be termed mementoes of former happiness. She repeated, in soft and tremulous accents, the name of Mortimer; but as the beloved name vibrated on her ear, how did she start at recollecting that she was then calling upon the husband of lady Euphrasia! she felt a momentary glow upon her cheeks; she arose, and sighed deeply; "I will strive to do right," she cried; "I will try to wean my soul from remembrances no longer proper to be indulged." Yet still she lingered in the wood. The increasing gloom of evening rendered it, if possible, more pleasing to her feelings; whilst the breeze sighed mournfully through the trees, and the droning bat fluttered in the air, upon which the wild music of a harp, from one of the neighbouring cottages, softly floated. Amanda drew nearer to the house; it looked dark

and melancholy; she sighed; she involuntarily exclaimed, "Oh, how soon will it be enlivened by bridal pomp and festivity!"

She now recollected the uneasiness her long absence might create at the cottage, and as soon as the idea occurred, hastened to it. She met Edwin in the lane, who had been dispatched, by his wife, in quest of her. The good woman expressed her fears, that such late rambles would injure the health of Amanda; it was a sad thing, she said, to see young people giving way to such dismal fancies.

Amanda did not confine her rambles entirely to Tudor Hall, she visited all the spots where she and Mortimer used to ramble together. She went to the humble spot where her mother lay interred. Her feelings were now infinitely more painful than when she had first seen it; it recalled to her mind, in the most agonizing manner, all the vicissitudes she had experienced since that period—it recalled to view the calamitous closure of her father's life, the sorrows, the distresses of that life, and she felt overwhelmed with grief. Scarcely could she prevent herself from falling on the grave, and giving way, in tears and lamentations, to that grief. Deprived of the dearest connexions of life, blasted in hopes and expectations, "Oh, well had it been for me," she cried, "had this spot at once received the mother and the child; and yet," she exclaimed, after a minute's reflection, "oh, what, my God, am I, that I should dare to murmur or repine at thy decrees?

crees? Oh, pardon the involuntary expressions of a woe-worn heart, of a heart that feels the purest gratitude for thy protection through past dangers! Oh, how presumptuous," she continued, "to repine at the common lot of humanity, as the lot of her," she continued, casting her tearful eyes upon the grave, where the last flowers of autumn were now withering, "who reposes in this earthly bed—who, in life's meridian, in beauty's prime, sunk, the sad victim of sorrow, into the arms of death! Oh, my parents, how calamitous were your destinies! even your ashes were not permitted to moulder together: but, in a happier region, your kindred spirits are now united. Blessed spirits, your child will strive to imitate your example; in patient resignation to the will of Heaven, she will endeavour to support life, she will strive to live, though not from an idea of enjoying happiness, but from an humble hope of being able to dispense it to others." Such were the words of Amanda at the grave of her mother, from which she turned, like a pale and drooping lily, surcharged with tears.

At the end of a week, she heard from Oscar, who told her, in the course of a few days, he expected to embark for Scotland.

Amanda had brought materials for drawing with her, and she felt a passionate desire of taking views of Tudor Hall—views, she believed, that would yield her a melancholy pleasure, when she should

be

be far, and for ever distant from the spots they represented. This desire, however, she could not gratify, without the assistance of her nurse, for the meant to take her views from the library; and she feared, if she went there without apprising the housekeeper, she should be liable to interruption: she therefore requested her nurse to ask permission for her to go there. The nurse shook her head, as if she suspected Amanda had a motive for the request she did not divulge. She was, however, too anxious to gratify her dear child, to refuse complying with it, and accordingly lost no time in asking the desired permission, which Mrs. Abergwilly readily gave; saying, Miss Fitzalan was welcome to go to the library whenever she pleased, and should not be interrupted. Amanda did not delay availing herself of this permission; but it was some time after she entered the library, ere she could compose herself sufficiently for the purpose which had brought her to it. In vain did nature appear from the windows, displaying the most beautiful and romantic scenery to her view, as if to tempt her to take up the pencil. Her eyes were dimmed with tears as she looked upon this scenery, and reflected that he who had once pointed out its various beauties was lost to her for ever. By degrees, however, her feelings grew composed; and every morning she repaired to the library, feeling, whilst engaged within it, a temporary alleviation of sorrow.

Three weeks passed in this manner, and at the expiration of that period she received a letter from Oscar. She trembled, in the most violent agitation, as she broke the seal; for she saw, by the post-mark, he was in Scotland: but how great was her surprise and joy at the contents of this letter, which informed her every thing relative to the important affair so lately in agitation, was settled in the most amicable manner; that the avowal of his claim occasioned not the smallest litigation; that he was then in full possession of the fortune bequeathed him by the Earl, and had already received the congratulations of the neighbouring families on his accession, or rather restoration, to it! He had not time, he said, to enumerate the many particulars which rendered the adjustment of affairs so easy; and hoped the pleasing intelligence his letter communicated, would atone for his brevity: he added, he was then preparing to set off for London with Sir Charles Bingley, of whose friendship he spoke in the highest terms, to settle some affairs relative to his new possessions, and particularly about the revival of the Dunreath title, which, not from any ostentatious pride, he desired to obtain, as he was sure she would suppose, but from gratitude and respect to the wishes of his grandfather, who, in his will, had expressed his desire that the honours of his family should be supported by his heir. When every thing was finally settled, he proceeded to say, he would hasten, on the wings of love and impatience, to her; for in her

her sweet society alone he found any balm for the sorrows of his heart—sorrows which could not be eradicated from it, though Fortune had been so unexpectedly propitious: and he hoped, he said, he should find her then gay as the birds, blooming as the flowerets of spring, and ready to accompany him to the venerable mansion of their ancestors.

The joyful intelligence this letter communicated, she had not spirits at present to mention to the inhabitants of the cottage; the pleasure it afforded was only damped by reflecting on what Lord Mortimer must feel, from a discovery which could not fail of casting a dark shade of obloquy upon his new connexions. She was now doubly anxious to finish her landscapes, from the prospect there was of her quitting Wales so soon. Every visit she now paid to the library was with the sad idea of its being the last. As she was preparing for going there one morning, immediately after breakfast, the nurse, who had been out some time previous to her rising, entered the room with a look of breathless impatience, which seemed to declare she had something wonderful to communicate. "Goot lack-a-taisy!" cried she, as soon as she had recovered her breath, lifting up her head from the back of the chair on which she had thrown herself; "Good lack-a-taisy! well, to pe sure, there is nothing but wonderful things happening in this world! Here, old Dame Abergwilly sent in such a hurry for me this morning: to be sure, I was surprised; but what was

that

that to the surprise I felt when I heard what she had sent to me for?"—It was now Amanda's turn to feel breathless impatience; "Good Heavens!" she exclaimed, "what did she tell you?"—"Aye, I knew," cried the nurse, "the commotion you would be in when I told you the news: if you were guessing from this time till this time to-morrow, you would never stumble on what it is."—"I dare say I should not," cried Amanda; "so do be brief."—"Why, you must know—put, Lort, my tear child, I am afraid you made a bad breakfast, for you look very pale; inteed, I made no great one myself, for I was in such a hurry-flurry with what Mrs. Abergwilly told me, that though she made some nice green tea, and we had a slim cake, I could scarcely touch any thing."—"Well," said Amanda, tortured with anxiety and impatience, "what did she tell you?"—"Why, my tear child, down came a special messenger from London, last night, to let them know that Lord Cherbury was tead, and that Lort Mortimer had sold Tudor Hall; and the steward is ordered to pay all the servants off, and to tischarge them; and to have every thing in readiness against the new lantlord comes down to take possession. Oh Lort! there is such weeping and wailing at the Hall; the poor creatures, who had grown old in the service, hoped to have finished their tays in it: it is not that they are in any fear of want; the young Lort has taken care of that, for he has settled something yearly upon them all; but that they

they are sorry to quit the family. Poor Mrs. Abergwilly, nothing can comfort the old soul: she has neither chick nor child; and she told me she loved the very chairs and tables, to which, to be sure, her hand has given many a polishing rub. She says she thinks she will come and lodge with me; but if she does, she says I must not put her into a room whence she can have a view of Tudor Hall, for she says she will never be able to look at it when once it gets a new master. So this, my dear child, is the sum total of what I have heard."

Amanda was equally astonished and affected by what she had heard. She wished to know if the nurse had received any intelligence of Lord Mortimer's marriage, but she could not bring herself to ask the question: besides, upon reflection, she was convinced she should have heard it, had it been the case. With Lord Cherbury died all hopes of the restoration of her fame in the opinion of his son. "Yet why," she asked herself, "should I regret this, since thus separated? it is better, perhaps, he has ceased to esteem me, as undoubtedly it must lessen his feelings on my account." Why he should part with Tudor Hall, she could not conceive, except it was to humour some caprice of Lady Euphrasia's, who, it was probable, she imagined, knew that the attachment between Lord Mortimer and her had there commenced. "Ah!" cried Amanda, "she never could have relished its beauties—beauties which, if Lord Mortimer thinks as I do, would,

if reviewed, only have augmented his sorrows—sorrows which propriety now demands his repelling."

She hastened to the Hall, but was some time ere she could commence her employment, so much had she been agitated. The landscape she was finishing was taken from the little valley which lay beneath the window of the music-room. The romantic ruins of an old castle overhung an eminence at its extremity, and of the whole scene she had taken a most accurate copy: it wanted but one charm to please her, and that charm was the figure of Lord Mortimer, with whom she had often wandered round the ruins. Her hand was ready in obeying the impulse of her heart; and she soon beheld, sketched in the most striking manner, the elegant features of him so ardently beloved. She gazed with rapture upon them, but it was a short-lived rapture. She started, as if conscious she had committed a crime, when she reflected on the situation in which he now stood with another woman. Her trembling hand hastened to atone for its error, by expunging the dangerous likeness, and the warm involuntary tear she shed at the moment, aided her design. "Oh, how unnecessary," she cried, as she made this sacrifice to delicacy, "to sketch features which are indelibly engraven on my heart!" As she spoke, a deep and long-drawn sigh reached her ear! Alarmed, confounded, at the idea of being overheard, and, of course, the feelings of her heart discovered, she started, with precipitation, from her seat, and looked

looked around her with a kind of wild confusion; but, gracious Heavens! who can describe the emotions of her soul, when the original of that picture, so foldly sketched, so hastily obliterated, met her eye! Amazed, unable to speak, to move, almost to breathe, she stood, motionless and aghast—the pale statue of Surprise, as if she neither durst or could believe the evidence of her eyes. Well, indeed, might she have doubted them; for in the pale countenance of Lord Mortimer scarce a vestige of his former self (except in the benignancy of his looks) remained; his faded complexion, the disorder of his hair, his mourning habit, all heightened the sad expression of his features—an expression which declared that he and happiness were never so disunited as at the present moment. The first violence of Amanda's feelings in a little time abated. She somewhat recovered the use of her faculties; and hastily snatching up her drawings, moved, with weak and trembling steps, to the door. She had nearly reached it, when the soft, the tremulous voice of Lord Mortimer arrested her course. "You go, then, Miss Fitzalan," cried he; "without one adieu, you go, and we never more shall meet!"—The agonizing manner in which these words were pronounced, struck a deathlike chill upon the heart of Amanda. She stopped, and turned round involuntarily, as if to receive that last, that sad adieu, which she was half reproached for avoiding. Lord Mortimer approached her. He attempted to speak, but

but his voice was inarticulate: a gush of sorrow burst from his eyes; and he hastily covered his face with a handkerchief, and walked to a window. Amanda, unutterably affected, was unable to stand: she sunk upon a chair; and watched, with a bursting heart, the emotions of Lord Mortimer. Oh, with what difficulty, at this moment, did she confine herself within the cold, the rigid rules of propriety —with what difficulty did she prevent herself from flying to Lord Mortimer, from mingling her tears with his, and lamenting the cruel destiny which had disunited them for ever! Lord Mortimer, in a few minutes, was sufficiently recovered again to approach her. "I have long wished for an opportunity of seeing you," said he; "but I had not courage to desire an interview. How little did I imagine this morning, when, like a sad exile, I came to take a last farewell of a favourite residence, that I should behold you! Fate, in granting this interview, has for once befriended me. To express my horror, my remorse, my anguish, not only for the error a combination of events led me into concerning you, but for the conduct that error influenced me to adopt, will, I think, a little lighten my heart: to receive your pardon will be a sweet, a sad consolation: yet," continued he, after a moment's pause, "why do I say it will be a consolation? Alas! the sweetness that may lead you to accord it, will only heighten my wretchedness at our eternal separation!"—Here he paused. Amanda was unable to speak.

speak. His words seemed to imply he was acquainted with the injuries she had sustained through his father's means; and she waited, in trembling expectation, for an explanation of them. "The purity of your character," exclaimed Lord Mortimer, "was at length fully revealed to me—Good Heaven, under what afflicting circumstances! by that being to whom you so generously made a sacrifice of what then you might have considered your happiness."—"Did Lord Cherbury, then," said Amanda, with inexpressible eagerness, "did he then at last justify me?"—"Yes," cried Lord Mortimer, "he proved you were indeed the most excellent, the most injured of human beings; that you were all which my fond heart had once believed you to be; but, oh, what were the dreadful emotions of that heart, to know his justification came too late to restore its peace! Once there was a happy period, when, after a similar error being removed, I had hoped, by a life for ever devoted to you, to have made some reparation, some atonement for my involuntary injustice; but, alas! no reparation, no atonement, can now be made!" Amanda wept; she raised her streaming eyes to Heaven, and again cast them to the earth. "You weep," cried Lord Mortimer, in a tone expressive of surprise, after surveying her some minutes in silence; "my love, my Amanda," continued he, suddenly seizing her hand, while he surveyed her with the most rapturous fondness, a crimson glow mantling his cheek, and a beam of wonted

brilliancy

brilliancy darting from his eye, "what am I to imagine from those tears? Are you then, indeed, unaltered?"—Amanda started. She feared the emotions she betrayed had convinced Lord Mortimer of the continuance, the unabated strength of her affection; she felt shocked at her imprudence, which had alone, she was convinced, tempted Lord Mortimer to address her in such a manner. "I know not, my Lord," cried she, "in what sense you ask whether I am unchanged; but of this be assured, a total alteration must have taken place in my sentiments, if I could remain a moment longer with a person who seems at once forgetful of what is due to his own situation and mine."—"Go, then, Madam," exclaimed Lord Mortimer, in an accent of displeasure; "and pardon my having thus detained you—pardon my involuntary offence, excuse my having disturbed your retirement, and obtruded my sorrows on you." Amanda had now reached the door. Her heart recoiled at the idea of parting in such a manner from Lord Mortimer, but prudence bade her hasten as fast as possible from him; yet slow and lingering, she pursued her way. Ere she had gone many yards, she was overtaken by Lord Mortimer: his pride was inferior to his tenderness, which drove him to despair at the idea of parting in displeasure from her. "Oh, my Amanda!" cried he, seizing her hand, and almost breathless with emotion, "add not, by your anger, to the bitterness of this sad hour; since we must

must part, oh, let us part in amity, as friends that regard each other! You have not yet (if indeed it is possible for you to do so) pronounced your forgiveness of the persecutions you underwent on my account; you have not yet granted your pardon, for the harshness, the cruelty, with which a dreadful error tempted me to treat you."—"Oh, my Lord!" said Amanda, again yielding to the softness of her soul, while tears trickled down her cheeks, "why torture me by speaking in this manner? how can I pronounce forgiveness, when I never was offended? When wretched and deserted, I appeared to stand upon the great theatre of life, without one hand to offer me assistance, your ready friendship came to my relief, and poured the balm of comfort upon the sorrows of my heart! When deprived, by deceit and cruelty, of your good opinion, even then your attention and solicitude pursued my wandering footsteps, and strove to mark a path of comfort for me to take! These, these are the obligations that never can be forgotten, that demand, that possess my eternal gratitude, my——" A warmer expression rose to her lips, but was again buried in her heart. She sighed; and, after a pause of a minute, thus went on: "for your happiness, my warmest, purest prayers are daily offered up. Oh, may it yet be equal to your virtues! greater I cannot wish it."—Lord Mortimer groaned in the excruciating agony of his soul. "Oh Amanda!" he said, "where, where can I receive consolation for your loss?

loss? Never, never, in this world!" He took her hands within his, he raised them to Heaven, as if supplicating its choicest blessings on her head. "For my happiness you pray!" he exclaimed; "ah, my love, how unavailing is the prayer!"

Amanda now saw, more than ever, the necessity of hastening away: she gently withdrew her hands, and hurried on as fast as her trembling limbs could carry her. Still Lord Mortimer attended her: "Yet, Amanda," cried he, "a little moment. Tell me," he continued, again seizing her hand, "do not these shades remind you of departed hours? Oh! what blissful ones have we not passed beneath their foliage, that foliage which I shall never more behold expanding to the breath of spring!"

Amanda trembled: this involuntary, but sad declaration of the loss of a seat so valued by him, overpowered her: her respiration grew faint; she could not support herself, and made a motion to sit down upon the grass; but Lord Mortimer eagerly caught her to his bosom. She had not strength to resist the effort, and her head reclined upon his shoulder; but who can speak her feelings, as she felt the beating heart of Mortimer, which, from its violent palpitations, seemed as if it would burst his bosom to find a passage to her feet? In a few minutes she was a little recovered; and sensible of the impropriety of her situation, was now resolutely determined to quit Lord Mortimer: "We must part, my Lord," cried she, disengaging herself from his

arms, notwithstanding a gentle effort he made to retain her; "we must part, my Lord," she repeated, "and part for ever!"—"Tell me then," he exclaimed, still impeding her course, "tell me whether I may hope to live in your remembrance? whether I may hope not to be obliterated from your memory, by the happiness which will shortly surround you? Promise I shall, at times, be thought of with your wonted, though, alas! unavailing wishes, for my happiness; and the promise will perhaps afford me consolation, in the solitary exile I have doomed myself to."—"Oh, my Lord!" said Amanda, unable to repress her feelings, "why do I hear you speak in this manner? In mentioning exile, do you not declare your intentions of leaving unfulfilled the claims which situation, family, and society have upon you? Oh, my Lord, you shock, shall I say more? you disappoint me; yes, I repeat it, disappoint the idea I had formed of the virtue and fortitude of him, who, as a friend, I shall ever regard—to yield thus to sorrow, to neglect the incumbent duties of life, to abandon a woman to whom so lately you plighted your solemn vows of love and protection. Oh, my Lord! what will her friends, what will Lady Euphrasia herself say to such cruel, such unjustifiable conduct?"—"Lady Euphrasia!" repeated Lord Mortimer, recoiling a few paces: "Lady Euphrasia!" he again exclaimed in tremulous accents, regarding Amanda with an expression of mingled horror and wildness: "Gracious Heaven!

ven! is it, can it be possible you are ignorant of the circumstances which lately happened? Yes; your words, your looks, declare you are so."

It was now Amanda's turn to repeat his words. She demanded, with a wildness of countenance equal to that he had just displayed, what were the circumstances he alluded to?—"First tell me," cried he, "was the alteration in your manner produced by your supposing me the husband of Lady Euphrasia?"—"Supposing you her husband!" repeated Amanda, unable to answer his question in a moment of such torturing suspense: "and are you not so?"—"No," replied Lord Mortimer; "I never had the misfortune to offer vows which my heart could not ratify: Lady Euphrasia made another choice. She was your enemy, but I know your gentle spirit will mourn her sad and sudden fate."—He ceased, for Amanda had no longer power to listen; she sunk, beneath surprise and joy, into the expanded arms of her beloved Mortimer.—It is ye alone, who, like her, have stood upon the very brink of despair, who, like her, have been restored, unexpectedly restored to hope, to happiness, that can form any judgment of her feelings at the present moment, at the moment when, recovering from her insensibility, the soft accent of Lord Mortimer saluted her ear, and made her heart, without one censure from propriety, respond to rapture as he held her to his bosom.

As he gazed on her with tears of impassioned ten-

derness, he repeated his question, whether the alteration in her manner was produced alone by the supposition of his marriage? but he repeated it with a sweet, a happy consciousness of having it answered according to his wishes.—"These tears, these emotions, oh Mortimer! what do they declare?" exclaimed Amanda: "ah! do they not say my heart never knew a diminution of tenderness? that it never could have forgotten you? Yes," she continued, raising her eyes, streaming with tears of rapture, to Heaven, "I am now recompensed for all my sufferings; yes, in this blissful moment I meet a full reward for them!"

Lord Mortimer now led her back to the library, to give an explanation of the events which had produced so great a reverse of situation; but it was long ere he could sufficiently compose himself to commence his narrative: alternately he fell at the feet of Amanda, alternately he folded her to his bosom, and asked his heart if its present happiness was real? A thousand times he questioned her whether she was indeed unaltered? as often implored her forgiveness for one moment doubting her constancy. Amanda exerted her spirits to calm her own agitation, that she might be enabled to sooth him into tranquillity: at length she succeeded; and he terminated her anxious impatience, by giving her the promised relation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

"By suffering well, our torture we subdue,
Fly when she frowns, and when she calls pursue."

OVERWHELMED with grief and disappointment at the supposed perfidy of Amanda, Lord Mortimer had returned to England; acquainting Lord Cherbury and Lady Martha of the unhappy cause of his returning alone, entreating them, in pity to his wounded feelings, never to mention the distressing subject before him: his dejection was unconquerable; all his schemes of felicity were overthrown, and the destruction of his hopes was the destruction of his peace. It was not in these first transports of bitter sorrow that Lord Cherbury ventured to speak his wishes to his son; he waited till, by slow degrees, he saw a greater degree of composure in his manner, though it was a composure attended with no abatement of melancholy. At first he only hinted those wishes; hints, however, which Lord Mortimer appeared designedly insensible of. At last the Earl spoke plainer: he mentioned his deep regret at beholding a son, whom he had ever considered the pride of his house and the solace of his days, wasting his youth in wretchedness for an ungrateful wo-

man, who had long triumphed in the infatuation which bound him to her. It filled his soul with anguish, he said, to behold him lost to himself, his family, and the world; thus disappointing all the hopes and expectations which the fair promise of his early youth had given rise to in the bosom of his friends, concerning the meridian of his day. Lord Mortimer was unutterably affected by what his father said: the Earl beheld his emotion, and blessed it as a happy omen: his pride, as well as sensibility, he continued, were deeply wounded at the idea of having Lord Mortimer still considered the slave of a passion which had met so base a return.—"Oh, let not the world," added he with increasing energy, "triumph in your weakness! Try to shake it off, ere the finger of scorn and ridicule is pointed at you, as the dupe of a deceitful woman's art."

Lord Mortimer was inexpressibly shocked: his pride had frequently represented as weakness the regret he felt for Amanda; and the Earl now stimulating that pride, he felt, at the moment, as if he could make any sacrifice which should prove his having triumphed over his unfortunate attachment; but when his father called upon him to make such a sacrifice, by uniting himself to Lady Euphrasia, he shrunk back, and acknowledged he could not give so fatal a proof of fortitude: he declared his total repugnance, at present, to any alliance; time, and the efforts of reason, he trusted, would subdue his ill-placed attachment, and enable him to comply with

with the wishes of his friends. Lord Cherbury would not, could not drop the subject next his heart—a subject so important, so infinitely interesting to him; he exerted all his eloquence, he entreated, he implored his son, not for ever to disappoint his wishes: he mentioned the compliance he had so recently shewn to his, though against his better judgment, in the useless consent he had given to his marriage with Miss Fitzalan.

Lord Mortimer, persecuted by his arguments, at length declared, that, was the object he pointed out for his alliance any other than Lady Euphrasia Sutherland, he would not perhaps be so reluctant to comply with his wishes; but she was a woman he could never esteem, and must consequently for ever refuse: she had given such specimens of cruelty and deceit, in the schemes she had entered into with the Marchioness against (he blushed, he faltered, as he pronounced her name) Miss Fitzalan, that his heart felt unutterable dislike to her. The Earl was prepared for this: he had the barbarity to declare, in the most unhesitating manner, he was sorry still to find him blinded by the art of that wretched girl. He bid him reflect on her conduct, and then consider whether any credence was to be given to her declaration of Belgrave's being admitted to the house without her knowledge.

Lord Mortimer was startled: her conduct indeed, as his father said, might well make him doubt her veracity; but still the evidence of the servants—

they acknowledged having been instruments in forwarding the scheme which she said was laid against her. He mentioned this circumstance; the Earl was also prepared for it: the servants, he declared, had been examined in his presence, when, with shame and contrition, they confessed, that, seeing the strong anxiety of Lord Mortimer for the restoration of Miss Fitzalan's fame, and tempted by the large bribes he offered, if they could or would say any thing in her justification, they had at last made the allegation so pleasing to him.—Lord Mortimer sighed deeply: "On every side," cried he, "I find I have been the dupe of art; but it was only the deceit of one could agonize my soul." Still, however, he was inexorable to all his father could say relative to Lady Euphrasia.

Lady Martha was at last called in as an auxiliary; she was now as strenuous for the connection as ever Lord Cherbury had been; a longer indulgence of Lord Mortimer's grief, she feared, would completely undermine his health, and either render him a burthen to himself, or precipitate him to an early grave. Whilst he continued single, she knew he would not consider any vigorous exertions for overcoming that grief necessary; but, if once united, she was convinced, from the rectitude and sensibility of his disposition, he would struggle against his feelings, in order to fulfil the incumbent duties he had imposed upon himself. Thus did she deem an union requisite to rouse him to exertion, to restore his peace, and,

in

in all probability, to save his life. She joined in her brother's arguments and entreaties, with tears she joined in them, and besought Mortimer to accede to their wishes; she called him the last hope of their house. He had long, she said, been the pride, the delight of their days; their comfort, their existence, were interwoven in his: if he sunk, they sunk with him.

The yielding soul of Mortimer could not resist such tenderness, and he gave a promise of acting as they wished—he imagined he could not be more wretched; but scarcely had this promise passed his lips, ere he felt an augmentation of misery. To enter into new engagements, to resign the sweet, though melancholy privilege of indulging his feelings, to fetter at once both soul and body, were ideas that filled him with unutterable anguish. A thousand times was he on the point of retracting his regretted and reluctant promise, had not honour interposed, and shewed the inability of doing so, without an infringement on its principles. Thus entangled, Mortimer endeavoured to collect his scattered thoughts; and in order to try and gain some composure, he altered his former plan of acting, and mingled as much as possible in society: he strove to fly from himself, that, by so doing, he might fly from the corrosive remembrances which embittered his life. But who shall paint his agonies at the unexpected sight of Amanda at the Macqueens'! The exertions he had for some time before compelled

himself to make, had a little abated the pain of his feelings; but that pain returned with redoubled violence at her presence, and every idea of present composure, or of future tranquillity, vanished. He felt with regret, with anguish, that she was as dear as ever to his soul, and his destined union became more hateful than ever to him. He tried, by recollecting her conduct, to awaken his resentment; but, alas! softness, in spite of all his efforts to the contrary, was the predominant feeling of his soul. Her pallid cheek, her deep dejection, seemed to say she was the child of sorrow and repentance. To sooth that sorrow, to strengthen that repentance, oh! how delightful unto him! but either he durst not do, situated as he then was.

With the utmost difficulty Lady Martha Dormer prevailed on him to be present when she demanded the picture from Amanda. That scene has already been described, also his parting one with her; but to describe the anguish he endured after this period, is impossible: he beheld Lady Euphrasia with a degree of horror; his faltering voice refused even to pay her the accustomed compliments of meeting: he loathed the society he met at the Castle, and regardless of what would be thought of him, regardless of health or the bleakness of the season, wandered, for hours together, in the most unfrequented parts of the domain, the veriest son of wretchedness and despair.

The day, the dreaded day at length arrived, which

was

was to complete his misery. The company were all assembled in the great hall of the Castle, from whence they were to proceed to the chapel, and every moment expected the appearance of the bride. The Marquis, surprised at her long delay, sent a messenger to request her immediate presence, who returned in a few minutes with a letter which he presented to the Marquis, who broke the seal in visible trepidation, and found it from Lady Euphrasia. She had taken a step, she said, which she must depend on the kind indulgence of her parents to excuse, a step which nothing but a firm conviction that happiness could not be experienced in a union with Lord Mortimer, should have tempted her to. His uniform indifference had at last convinced her, that motives of the most selfish nature alone influenced his addresses to her; and if her parents inquired into his, or at least Lord Cherbury's conduct, they would find her assertion true, and would consequently, she trusted, excuse her for not submitting to be sacrificed at the shrine of Interest. In selecting Mr. Freelove for her choice, she had selected a man whose addresses were not prompted by selfish views, but by a sincere affection, which he would openly have avowed, had he not been assured, in the present situation of affairs, it would have met with opposition: to avoid, therefore, a positive act of disobedience, she had consented to a private union. To Lord Mortimer and Lord Cherbury, she said, she deemed no apology necessary for her conduct, as their hearts, at

least Lord Cherbury's, would at once exculpate her, from his own consciousness of not having acted either generously or honourably to her.

The violent transports of passion the Marquis experienced are not to be described. The Marchioness hastily perused the letter, and her feelings were not inferior in violence to his. Its contents were soon known, and amazement sat on every countenance: but, oh! what joy did they inspire in the soul of Lord Mortimer! not a respite, or rather a full pardon to the condemned wretch, at the very moment when preparing for death, could have yielded more exquisite delight: but to Lord Cherbury, what a disappointment! it was indeed a death-stroke to his hopes: the hints in Lady Euphrasia's letter concerning him, plainly declared her knowledge of his conduct. He foresaw an immediate demand from Freelove, foresaw the disgrace he should experience, when his inability to discharge that demand was known: his soul was shaken in its inmost recesses, and the excruciating anguish of his feelings was indeed as severe a punishment as he could suffer: pale, speechless, aghast, the most horrid ideas took possession of his mind; yet he sought not to repel them, for any thing was preferable to the shame he saw awaiting him.

Lord Mortimer's indignation was excited by the aspersions cast upon his father, aspersions he imputed entirely to the malice of Lady Euphrasia, and which, from the character of Lord Cherbury, he deemed

deemed it unnecessary to attempt refuting. But, alas! what a shock did his noble, his unsuspicious nature receive, when, in a short time after the perusal of her letter, one from Freelove was brought him, which fully proved the truth of her assertions! Freelove, in his little trifling manner, expressed his hopes that there would be no difference between his Lordship and him, for whom he expressed the most entire friendship, on account of the fair lady who had honoured him with her regard; declared her partiality was quite irresistible; and moreover, that, in love as well as war, every advantage was allowable; begged to trouble his Lordship with his compliments to Lord Cherbury, and a request that every thing might be prepared to settle matters between them, on his return from his matrimonial expedition. An immediate compliance with this request, he was convinced, could not be in the least distressing; and it was absolutely essential to him, from the *eclat* with which he designed Lady Euphrasia Freelove should make her bridal entry into public. As to the report, he said, which he had heard relative to Lord Cherbury's losing the fortune which was entrusted to his care for him at the gaming-table, he quite disbelieved it.

The most distressing, the most mortifying feelings, pervaded the soul of Lord Mortimer at this part of the letter: it explained the reasons of Lord Cherbury's strong anxiety for an alliance with the Rosline family, which Lord Mortimer indeed had often wondered

wondered at, and he at once pitied, condemned, and blushed for him. He stole a glance at his father, and his deep despairing look filled him with horror: he resolved, the first opportunity, to declare his knowledge of the fatal secret which oppressed him, and his resolution of making any sacrifice which could possibly remove or lessen his inquietude.—Lord Cherbury was anxious to fly from the now hated Castle, ere further confusion overtook him: he mentioned his intention of immediately departing, an intention opposed by the Marquis, but in which he was steady, and also supported by his son.

Every thing was ready for their departure, when Lord Cherbury, overwhelmed by the dreadful agitations he experienced, was seized with a fit of the most violent and alarming nature: he was carried to a chamber, and recourse was obliged to be had to a physician, ere the restoration of his senses was effected; but he was then so weak, that the physician declared, if not kept quiet, a return of his disorder might be expected. Lord Mortimer, tenderly impatient to lighten the burden on his father's mind, dismissed the attendants as soon as he possibly could, and then, in the most delicate terms, declared his knowledge of his situation. Lord Cherbury, at this, started up in the most violent paroxysm of anguish, and vowed he would never survive the discovery of his being a villain: with difficulty could Lord Mortimer compose him; but it was long ere he could prevail on him to hear what he wished to say. Few

there

there were, he said, who, at some period or other of their lives, he believed, were not led into actions which, upon reflection, they had reason to regret. He thought not, he meant not to speak slightly of human nature, he only wished to prove, that, liable as we all are to frailty, a frailty intended, no doubt, to check the arrogance of pride and presumption, we should not suffer the remembrance of error, when once sincerely repented of, to plunge us into despair, particularly when, as far as in our power, we meant to atone for it. Thus did Lord Mortimer attempt to calm the dreadful conflicts of his father's mind, who still continued to inveigh against himself. —The sale of Tudor Hall, Lord Mortimer proceeded, and mortgages upon Lord Cherbury's estates, would enable his father to discharge his debt to Mr. Freelove. He knew, he said, it was tenderness to him which had prevented him, ere this, from adopting such a plan; but he besought him to let no further consideration, on his account, make him delay fulfilling immediately the claims of honour and justice. He besought him to believe his tranquillity was more precious to him than any thing in life; that the restoration of his peace was far more estimable to him than the possession of the most brilliant fortune—"a possession which," continued Lord Mortimer, deeply sighing, "I am well convinced, will not alone yield happiness. I have long," said he, "looked with an eye of cool indifference on the pomps, the pageantries of life: disappointed in my tenderest

tenderest hopes and expectations, wealth, merely on my own account, has been long valueless to me; its loss, I make no doubt, nay, I am convinced, I shall have reason to consider as a blessing; it will compel me to make those exertions which its possession would have rendered unnecessary, and by so doing, in all probability remove from my heart that sadness which has so long clung about it, and enervated all its powers. A profession lies open to receive me, which, had I been permitted, at a much earlier period I should have embraced, for a military life was always my passion: at the post of danger I may perhaps have the happiness of performing services for my country, which, while loitering supinely in the shade of prosperity, I never could have done. Thus, my dear father," he continued, "you see how erroneous we are in the opinions we often form of things, since that we often consider as the bitterest evil, leads to the most supreme good. We will, as soon as possible, hasten every thing to be prepared for Freelove; and thus, I make no doubt, disappoint the little malice of his soul. My aunt, my sister, are unacquainted with your uneasiness, nor shall an intimation of it from me ever transpire to them: of fortune, sufficient will remain to allow, though not the splendour, the comforts and elegancies of life. As for me, the deprivation of what is considered, and falsely termed, my accustomed indulgences, will be the most salutary and efficacious thing that could possibly happen to me: in short, I believe

believe that the realization of my plan will render me happy, since, with truth I can assure you, its anticipation has already given more pleasure to my soul than I thought it would ever have again enjoyed."

Lord Cherbury, overcome by the tenderness, the virtue of his son, by the sacrifice he so willingly offered, so strenuously insisted on making, of his paternal fortune, could not for some minutes speak; at length the struggling emotions of his soul found utterance: "Oh, virtue!" he exclaimed, while tears of love, of gratitude, of contrition, flowed from his eyes, and fell upon the hand of his son, clasped within his, "oh, virtue! I cannot say, like Brutus, thou art but a shade; no, here, in this invaluable son, thou art personified—this son, whom I so cruelly deceived, so bitterly distressed! Oh, gracious powers! would not that heroic, that heaven-born disposition, which now leads him to sign away his paternal fortune for my sake, have also led him to a still greater resignation, the sacrifice of his Amanda, had I entrusted him with my wretched situation? Oh, had I confided in him, what an act of baseness should I have avoided! what pangs, what tortures should I have prevented his experiencing! But, to save my own guilty confusion, I drew wretchedness upon his head; I wrung every fibre of his heart with agony, by making him believe its dearest, its most valuable object, unworthy of its regard."—Mortimer started: he gasped; he repeated, in faltering accents,

accents, these last words: his soul seemed as if it would burst its mortal bounds, and soar to another region, to hear an avowal of his Amanda's purity.—"Oh, Mortimer!" cried the Earl, in the deep desponding tone of anguish, "how shall I dare to lift my eyes to thine, after the avowal of the injustice I have done one of the most amiable and loveliest of human beings?"—"Oh, tell me," cried Mortimer, in breathless, trembling agitation, "tell me, if indeed she is all my fond heart once believed her to be? In mercy, in pity, delay not to inform me."—Slowly, in consequence of his weakness, but with all the willingness of a contrite spirit, anxious to do justice to the injured, did Lord Cherbury reveal all that had passed between him and Amanda. "Poor Fitzalan!" cried he, as he finished his relation, "poor unhappy friend! from thy cold grave couldst thou have known the transactions of this world, how must thy good and feeling spirit have reproached me for my barbarity to thy orphan, in robbing her of the only stipend thy adverse fortune had power to leave her—a pure and spotless fame!"

Lord Mortimer groaned with anguish: every reproachful word he had uttered to Amanda, darted upon his remembrance, and were like so many daggers to his heart. It was his father that oppressed her: this knowledge aggravated his feelings, but stifled his reproaches; it was a father, contrite, perhaps, at that very moment, stretched upon a deathbed; therefore he forgave him. He cast his eyes around,

around, as if, in that moment, he had hoped to behold her, have an opportunity of falling prostrate at her feet, and implore her forgiveness; he cast his eyes around, as if imagining he should see her, and be allowed to fold her to his beating heart, and ask her soft voice to pronounce his pardon. "Oh, thou lovely mourner!" he exclaimed to himself, while a gush of sorrow burst from his eyes; "oh, thou lovely mourner! when I censured, reviled, upbraided you, even at that very period your heart was suffering the most excruciating anguish: yes, Amanda, he who would willingly have laid down life to yield thee peace, even he was led to aggravate thy woes. With what gentleness, what unexampled patience didst thou bear my reproaches! No sudden ray of indignation, for purity so insulted, innocence so arraigned, flashed from thy eyes; the beams of meekness and resignation alone stole from beneath their tearful lids. No sweet hope of being able to atone, no delightful idea of being able to make reparation for my injustice, now alleviates the poignancy of my feelings. Since fate interposed between us in the hour of prosperity, I cannot, in the bleak and chilling period of adversity, seek to unite your destiny with mine: now, almost the child of want myself, a soldier of fortune, obliged by the sword to earn my bread, I cannot think of leading you into difficulties and dangers greater than you ever before experienced. Oh, my Amanda! may the calm shade of security be for ever thine! thy Mortimer,

timer, thy ever faithful, ever adoring Mortimer, will not, from any selfish consideration, seek to lead thee from it! If thy loss be agonizing, oh! how much more agonizing to possess, but to see thee in danger or distress! I will go then into new scenes in life, with only thy dear, thy sweet and worshipped idea, to cheer and to support me—an idea I shall lose but with life, and which to know I may cherish, indulge, adore, without a reproach from reason for weakness in so doing, is a sweet and soothing consolation."

The indulgence of feelings, such as his language expressed, he was obliged to forego, in order to fulfil the wish he felt of alleviating the situation of his father; but his attention was unable to lighten the anguish which oppressed the mind of Lord Cherbury: remorse for his past conduct, mortification at being lessened in the estimation of his son, sorrow for the injury he was compelled to do him, to be extricated from the power of Freelove—all preyed upon his mind, produced the most violent agitation, and an alarming repetition of fits.

Things remained in this situation for a few days, during which time no intelligence had been received of Euphrasia, when one morning, as Lord Mortimer was sitting for a few minutes with the Marquis and Marchioness, a servant entered the apartment, and informed his Lord that a gentleman was just arrived at the Castle, who requested to be introduced to his presence. The Marquis and Marchioness instantly concluded this was some person sent as an intercessor from

from Lady Euphrasia, and they instantly admitted him, in order to have an opportunity of assuring her Ladyship, through his means, it must be some time (if indeed at all) ere they could possibly forgive her disrespect and disobedience. Lord Mortimer would have retired, but was requested to stay; and complied, prompted indeed by curiosity to hear what kind of apology or message Lady Euphrasia had sent. A man of a most pleasing appearance entered, and was received with the most frigid politeness: he looked embarrassed, agitated, even distressed: he attempted several times to speak, but the words still died away undistinguished. At length the Marchioness, yielding to the natural impetuosity of her soul, hastily desired he would reveal what had procured them the honour of his visit?—"A circumstance of the most unhappy nature, Madam," he replied, in a hesitating voice: "I came with the hope, the expectation of being able to break it by degrees, so as not totally to overpower; but I find myself unequal to the distressing task."—"I fancy, Sir," cried the Marchioness, "both the Marquis and I are already aware of the circumstance you allude to."—"Alas, Madam," said the stranger, fixing his eyes with a mournful earnestness on her face, "I cannot think so! if you were, it would not be in human, in paternal nature, to appear as you now do:" he stopped, he turned pale, he trembled, his emotions became contagious.—"Tell me," said the Marquis, in a voice scarcely articulate, "I beseech

you,

you, without delay, the meaning of your words."—The stranger essayed to speak, but could not; words indeed were scarcely necessary to declare that he had something shocking to reveal. His auditors, like old Northumberland, might have said, "The paleness on thy cheek is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand."—"Something dreadful has happened to my child!" said the Marchioness, forgetting, in that agonizing moment, all displeasure.—"Alas, Madam!" cried the stranger, while a tear denoted his sensibility for the sorrows he was about giving rise to, "alas, Madam, your fears are too well founded! to torture you with longer suspense, would be barbarity. Something dreadful has happened indeed—Lady Euphrasia, in this world, will never more be sensible of your kindness."

A wild, a piercing, agonizing shriek, burst from the lips of the Marchioness, as she dropped senseless from her seat: the Marquis was sinking from his, had not Lord Mortimer, who sat by him, timely started up, and though trembling himself with horror, caught him in his arms. The servants were summoned; the still-insensible Marchioness was carried to her chamber. The wretched Marquis reviving in a few minutes, if that could be called reviving which was only a keener perception of misery, demanded, in a tone of anguish, the whole particulars of the sad event; yet scarcely had the stranger begun to comply with his request, ere, with all the wild inconsistency of grief, he bade him

to

to forbear, and shuddering, declared he could not listen to the dreadful particulars. But it were needless, as well as impossible, to describe the feelings of the wretched parents, who, in one moment, beheld their hopes, their wishes, their expectations, finally destroyed. Oh, what an awful lesson did they inculcate of the instability of human happiness, of the insufficiency of rank or riches to retain it! This was one of the events which Providence, in its infinite wisdom, makes use of to arrest the thoughtless in their career of dissipation, and check the arrogance of pride and vanity. When we behold the proud, the wealthy, the illustrious, suddenly surprised by calamity, and sinking beneath its stroke, we naturally reflect on the frail tenure of earthly possessions, and from the reflection, consider how we may best attain that happiness which cannot change. The human heart is, in general, so formed, as to require something great and striking to interest and affect it: thus, a similar misfortune happening to a person in a conspicuous, and to one in an obscure situation, would not, in all probability, equally affect, or call home, the wandering thoughts to sadness and reflection: the humble floweret, trampled to the dust, is passed with an eye of careless indifference; but the proud oak, torn from the earth and levelled by the storm, is viewed with wonder and affright. The horrors of the blow which overwhelmed the Marquis and Marchioness, were augmented by the secret whispers of conscience, that seemed to say, it was a

blow

blow of retribution from a Being all-righteous and all-just, whose most sacred laws they had violated, in oppressing the widow and defrauding the orphan. Oh, what an augmentation of misery is it to think it merited! Remorse, like the vengeance of Heaven, seemed now awakened, to sleep no more; no longer could they palliate their conduct, no longer avoid retrospection, a retrospection which heightened the gloomy horrors of the future. In Lady Euphrasia, all the hopes, the affections of the Marquis and Marchioness were centered: she alone had ever made them feel the tenderness of humanity; yet she was not less the darling of their love than the idol of their pride: in her they beheld the being who was to support the honours of their house, and transmit their names to posterity; in her they beheld the being who gave them an opportunity of gratifying the malevolent, as well as the tender and ambitious passions of their souls. The next heir to the Marquis's title and fortune had irreconcileably disobliged him; as a means, therefore, of disappointing him, if on no other account, Lady Euphrasia would have been regarded by them. Though she had disappointed and displeased them by her recent act of disobedience, and though they had deemed it essential to their consequence to display that displeasure, yet they secretly resolved not long to withhold forgiveness from her, and also to take immediate steps for ennobling Freelove. For Lady Euphrasia they felt indeed a tenderness her heart for them was totally a

stranger

stranger to; it seemed indeed as if, cold and indifferent to all the rest of mankind, their affections were stronger for being confined in one channel. In the step she had taken, Lady Euphrasia only considered the gratification of her revenge.

Freelove, as the ward of Lord Cherbury, in honour to him, had been invited to the nuptials: he accepted the invitation, but, instead of accompanying, promised to follow the bridal party to the Castle. A day or two ere he intended setting out, by some accidental chance he got into company with the very person to whom Lord Cherbury had lost so much, and on whose account he had committed an action which had entailed the most excruciating remorse upon him. This person was acquainted with the whole transaction: he had promised to keep his knowledge secret; but the promises of the worthless are of little avail. A slight expression, which, in a moment of anxiety, had involuntarily dropped from Lord Cherbury, had stung him to the soul, because he knew too well its justice, and inspired him with the most inveterate hatred, and rancorous desire of revenge: his unexpectedly meeting Freelove afforded him an opportunity of gratifying both these propensities, and he scrupled not to avail himself of it. Freelove was astonished, and, when the first violence of astonishment was over, delighted.

To triumph over the proud soul of Lord Cherbury and his son, was indeed an idea which afforded rapture. Both he had ever disliked, the latter particu-

larly: he disliked him, from the superiority which he saw, in every respect, he possessed over himself. A stranger to noble emulation, he sought not, by study or imitation, to aspire to any of those graces or perfections he beheld in Lord Mortimer; he sought alone to depreciate them; and, when he found that impossible, beheld him with greater envy and malignity than ever. To wound Lord Mortimer through the bosom of his father, to overwhelm him with confusion, by publicly displaying the error of that father, were ideas of the most exquisite delight, ideas which the wealth of worlds would scarcely have tempted him to forego: so sweet is any triumph, however accidental or imaginary, over a noble object, to an envious mind, which ever hates that excellence it cannot reach. No fear of self-interest being injured checked his pleasure; the fortune of Lord Cherbury he knew sufficient to answer for his violated trust. Thus had he another source of triumph, in the prospect of having those, so long considered as the proud rivals of his wealth and splendour, cast into the shade. His pleasure, however, from this idea, was short-lived, when he reflected that Lord Mortimer's union with Lady Euphrasia would totally exempt him from feeling any inconvenience from his father's conduct. But, could not this union be prevented? Freelove asked himself. He still wanted a short period of being of age, consequently had no right, at present, to demand a settlement of his affairs from Lord Cherbury: he might,

might, however, privately inform Lady Euphrasia of the affair so recently communicated to him. No sooner did he conceive this scheme, than he glowed with impatience to put it into execution: he hastened to the Marquis's, whither indeed the extravagant and foppish preparations he had made for the projected nuptials had before prevented his going, and took the first opportunity which offered of revealing to Lady Euphrasia, as if from the purest friendship, the conduct of Lord Cherbury, and the derangement of his affairs.

Lady Euphrasia was at once surprised and incensed: the reason for an union between her and his son being so ardently desired by Lord Cherbury, was now fully explained, and she beheld herself as an object addressed, merely with a view of repairing a ruined fortune: but this view she resolved to disappoint. Such was the implacable nature of her disposition, that, had this disappointment occasioned the destruction of her own peace, it would not have made her relinquish it; but this was not the case: in sacrificing all ideas of an union with Lord Mortimer to her offended pride, she sacrificed no wish or inclination of her soul. Lord Mortimer, though the object of her admiration, had never been the object of her love; she was indeed incapable of feeling that passion. Her admiration had, however, long since given place to resentment, at the cool indifference with which he regarded her: she would have opposed a marriage with him, but for fear that he

might, thus freed, attach himself to Amanda. The moment, however, she knew an union with her was necessary for the establishment of his fortune, fear, with every consideration which could oppose it, vanished before the idea of disappointing his views, and retaliating upon him that uneasiness he had, from wounded pride, made her experience, by his cold and unalterable behaviour to her.

She at first determined to acquaint the Marquis of what she had heard, but a little reflection made her drop this determination: he had always professed a warm regard for Lord Cherbury, and she feared that regard would still lead him to insist on the nuptials taking place. She was not long in concerting a scheme to render such a measure impracticable; and Freelove she resolved to make an instrument for forwarding, or rather executing, her revenge. She hesitated not to say, she had always disliked Mortimer; that, in short, there was but one being she could ever think, ever hope, to be happy with. Her broken sentences, her looks, her affected confusion, all revealed to Freelove that he was that object. The rapture this discovery inspired, he could not conceal: the flattering expressions of Lady Euphrasia were repaid by the most extravagant compliments, the warmest professions, the strongest assurances, of never-dying love. This soon led to what she desired; and, in a short space, an elopement was agreed to, and every thing relative to it settled: Freelove's own servants and equipage were at the Castle,

Castle, and consequently but little difficulty attended the arrangement of their plan. In Lady Euphrasia's eyes, Freelove had no other value than what he now merely derived from being an instrument in gratifying the haughty and revengeful passions of her nature; she regarded him, indeed, with sovereign contempt. His fortune, however, she knew, would give him consequence in the world; and she was convinced she should find him quite that easy, convenient husband, which a woman of fashion finds so necessary: in short, she looked forward to being the uncontrolled mistress of her own actions, and without a doubt but that she should meet many objects as deserving of her admiration, and infinitely more grateful for it, than ever Lord Mortimer had been. Flushed with such a pleasing prospect, she quitted the Castle, that Castle she was destined never more to see: at the moment, the very moment she smiled with joy and expectation, the shaft, the unerring shaft, was raised against her breast.

The marriage ceremony over, they hastened to the vicinity of the Castle, in order to send an apologizing letter, as usual on such occasions. The night was dark and dreary, the road rugged and dangerous: the postillions ventured to say, it would be better to halt for the night; but this was opposed by Lady Euphrasia: they were within a few miles of the destined termination of their journey, and, pursuant to her commands, they proceeded. In a few minutes after this, the horses, startled by a sud-

den light which gleamed across the path, began plunging in the most alarming manner: a frightful precipice lay on one side, and the horses, in spite of all the efforts of the postillions, continued to approach it. Freelove, in this dreadful moment, lost all consideration but for himself; he burst open the chariot door, and leaped into the road. His companion was unable to follow his example—she had fainted at the first intimation of danger. The postillions with difficulty dismounted; the other servants came to their assistance, and endeavoured to restrain the horses: every effort was useless—they broke from their hold, and plunged down the precipice.—The servants had heard the chariot-door open, they therefore concluded, for it was too dark to see, that both their master and Lady Euphrasia were safe. But who can describe their horror, when a loud shriek from him declared her situation! Some of them immediately hastened, as fast as their trembling limbs could carry them, to the house adjoining the road, from whence the fatal light had gleamed which caused the sad catastrophe: they revealed it in a few words, and implored immediate assistance. The master of the house was a man of the greatest humanity; he was inexpressibly shocked at what he had heard, and joined himself in giving the assistance that was desired.

With lanthorns they proceeded down a winding path cut in the precipice, and soon discovered the objects of their search: the horses were already dead,

dead, the chariot was shattered to pieces. They took up some of the fragments, and discovered beneath them the lifeless body of the unfortunate Lady Euphrasia.

The stranger burst into tears at a sight of so much horror, and, in a voice scarcely audible, gave orders for her being conveyed to his house: but, when a better light gave a more perfect view of the mangled remains, all acknowledged that, since so fatal an accident had befallen her, Heaven was merciful in taking a life whose continuance would have made her endure the most excruciating tortures.

Freelove was now inquired for: he had fainted on the road, but, in a few minutes after he was brought in, recovered his senses; and the first use he made of them, was to inquire whether he was dead or alive. Upon receiving the comfortable assurance of the latter, he congratulated himself in a manner so warm upon his escape, as plainly proved self was his whole and sole consideration. No great preparations, on account of his feelings, were requisite to inform him of the fate of Lady Euphrasia: he shook his head on hearing it, said it was what he already guessed, from the devilish plunge of the horses; declared it was a most unfortunate affair, and expressed a kind of terror at what the Marquis might say to it, as if he could have been accused of being accessary to it.

Mr. Murray, the gentleman whose house had received him, offered to undertake the distressing task of breaking the affair to Lady Euphrasia's family,

an offer Freelove gladly accepted, declaring he felt himself too much disordered in mind and body, to be able to give any directions relative to what was necessary to be done. How Mr. Murray executed his task is already known; but it was long ere the emotions of the Marquis would suffer him to say he wished the remains of Lady Euphrasia to be brought to the Castle, that all the honours due to her birth should be paid them. This was accordingly done; and the Castle, so lately ornamented for her nuptials, was hung with black, and all the pageantries of death. The Marquis and Marchioness confined themselves, in the deepest anguish, to their apartments; their domestics, filled with terror and amazement, glided about like pale spectres; and all was a scene of solemnity and sadness.

Every moment Lord Mortimer could spare from his father, he devoted to the Marquis. Lady Euphrasia had ever been an object of indifference, nay, of dislike to him; but the manner of her death, notwithstanding, shocked him to the soul: his dislike was forgotten—he thought of her only with pity and compassion; and the tears he mingled with the Marquis, were the tears of unfeigned sympathy and regret.

Lady Martha and Lady Araminta were equally attentive to the Marchioness; the time not spent with Lord Cherbury, was devoted to her. They used unavailing arguments to conquer a grief which Nature, as her rightful tribute, demands; but they soothed

soothed that grief, by shewing they sincerely mourned its source.

Lord Cherbury had but short intervals of reason; those intervals were employed by Lord Mortimer in trying to compose his mind, and by him in blessing his son for those endeavours, and congratulating himself on the prospect of approaching dissolution. His words unutterably affected Lord Mortimer; he had reason to believe they were dictated by a prophetic spirit; and the dismal peal which rung, from morning till night, for Lady Euphrasia, sounded in his ear as the knell of his expiring father.

Things were in this situation in the Castle, when Oscar, and his friend Sir Charles Bingley, arrived at it; and, without sending in their names, requested immediate permission to the Marquis's presence, upon business of importance. Their request was complied with, from an idea that they came from Freelove, to whom the Marquis and Marchioness, from respect and affection to the memory of their daughter, had determined to pay every attention.

The Marquis knew, and was personally known to Sir Charles. He was infinitely surprised by his appearance; but how much was that surprise increased, when Sir Charles, taking Oscar by the hand, presented him to the Marquis as the son of Lady Fitzalan, the rightful heir of the Earl of Dunreath!

The Marquis was confounded: he trembled at these words; and his confusion, had such a testimony been wanting, would have been sufficient to

prove his guilt. He at last, though with a faltering voice, desired to know by what means Sir Charles could justify or support his assertion?—Sir Charles, for Oscar was too much agitated to speak, as briefly as possible related all the particulars which had led to the discovery of the Earl's will; and his friend, he added, with the generosity of a noble mind, wished as much as possible to spare the feelings, and save the honour of those with whom he was connected; a wish, which nothing but a hesitation in complying with his just and well-supported claim could destroy.

The Marquis's agitation increased; already was he stripped of happiness, and he now saw himself on the point of being stripped of honour. An hour before, he had imagined his wretchedness could not be augmented; he was now convinced, human misery cannot be complete without the loss of reputation: in the idea of being esteemed, of being thought undeserving our misfortunes, there is a sweet, a secret balm, which meliorates the greatest sorrow. Of riches, in his own right, the Marquis ever possessed more than sufficient for all his expences: those expences would now, comparatively speaking, be reduced within very narrow bounds; for the vain pride which had led him to delight in pomp and ostentation, died with Lady Euphrasia. Since, therefore, of his fortune such a superabundance would remain, it was unnecessary, as well as unjust, to detain what he had no pretensions to; but he feared,

tamely

tamely acquiescing in this unexpected claim, would be to acknowledge himself a villain. 'Tis true indeed, that his newly-felt remorse had inspired him with a wish of making reparations for his past injustice: but false shame starting up, hitherto opposed it; and, even now, when an opportunity offered of accomplishing his wish, still continued to oppose it, lest the scorn and contempt he dreaded should at length be his portion for his long injustice.

Irresolute how to act, he sat for some time silent and embarrassed; till at last recollecting his manner was probably betraying what he wished to conceal, namely, the knowledge of the will, he said, with some sternness, that, till he inspected into the affair so recently laid before him, he could not, nor was it to be expected he should, say how he would act—an inspection which, under the melancholy circumstances he then laboured, he could not possibly make for some time. Had Mr. Fitzalan, he added, possessed in reality that generosity Sir Charles's partiality ascribed to him, he would not, at a period so distressing, have appeared to make such a claim. By delicacy and sensibility the privileges of grief were ever held sacred; those privileges they had both violated; they had intruded on his sorrows, they had even insulted him, by appearing on such a business before him, ere the last rites were paid to his lamented child.

Sir Charles and Oscar were inexpressibly shocked; both were totally ignorant of the recent event.—

Oscar, as he recovered from the surprise the Marquis's words had given him, declared, in the impassioned language of a noble mind, hurt by being thought destitute of sensibility, that the Marquis had arraigned him unjustly. Had he known of his sorrows, he said, nothing should have tempted him to intrude upon them; he mourned, he respected them; he besought him to believe him sincere in what he uttered. A tear, an involuntary tear, as he spoke, starting into his eye, and trickling down his cheek, denoted his sincerity.

The Marquis's heart smote him, as he beheld this tear; it reproached him more than the keenest words could have done, and operated more in Oscar's favour than any arguments, however eloquent. "Had this young man," thought he, "been really illiberal when I reproached him for want of sensibility, how well might he have retaliated upon me my more flagrant want of justice and humanity! But no; he sees I am a son of sorrow, and he will not break the reed which Heaven has already smitten." Tears gushed from his eyes; he involuntarily extended his hand to Oscar—"I see," said he, "I see indeed I have unjustly arraigned you; but I will endeavour to atone for my error. At present rest satisfied with an assurance, that whatever is equitable shall be done; and that, let events turn out as they may, I shall ever feel myself your friend."—Oscar again expressed his regret for having waited on him at such a period, and requested he would dismiss, for the present,

present, the subject they had been talking of, from his mind. The Marquis, still more pleased with his manner, desired his direction, and assured him he should hear from him sooner than he expected.

As soon as they retired, his agitation decreased, and, of course, he was better qualified to consider how he should act. That restitution his conscience prompted, but his false ideas of shame had prevented, he now found he should be compelled to make: how to make it, therefore, so as to avoid total disgrace, was what he considered. At last he adopted a scheme, which the sensibility of Oscar, he flattered himself, would enable him to accomplish: this was to declare, that, by the Earl of Dunreath's will, Mr. Fitzalan was heir to his estates, in case of the death of Lady Euphrasia; that, in consequence, therefore, of this event, he had come to take possession of them; that Lady Dunreath (whose residence at Dunreath Abbey he could not now hope to conceal) was but lately returned from a convent in France, where, for many years, she had resided. To Oscar he intended saying, from her ill conduct, he and the Marchioness had been tempted to sequester her from the world, in order to save her from open shame and derision; and that her declaration of a will they had always believed the mere fabrication of her brain, in order, as he supposed, to give them uneasiness.—This scheme once formed, his heart felt a little relieved of the heavy burthen of fear and inquietude: he repaired to the Marchioness's apartment, and broke

broke the affair gently to her; adding, at the same time, that, sensible as they now must be of the vanities and pursuits of human life, it was time for them to endeavour to make their peace with Heaven. Affliction had taught penitence to the Marchioness as well as to her husband: she approved of the scheme, and thought with him, that the sooner their intention of making restitution was known, the greater would be the probability of its being accomplished. Oscar, therefore, the next day, received a letter from the Marquis, specifying at once his intention and his wishes. With those wishes Oscar generously complied; his noble soul was superior to a triumph over a fallen enemy, and he had always wished rather to save from, than expose the Marquis to disgrace. He hastened as soon as possible to the Castle, agreeable to a request contained in the letter, to assure the Marquis, his conduct throughout the whole affair should be regulated according to his desire.

Perhaps, at this moment, public contempt could not have humbled the Marquis more than such generosity, when he drew a comparison between himself and the person he had so long injured; the striking contrast wounded his very soul, and he groaned at the degradation he suffered in his own eyes. He told Oscar, as soon as the last sad duties were performed to his daughter, he would settle every thing with him, and then perhaps be able to introduce him to the Marchioness. He desired he might take up

his

his residence in the Castle, and expressed a wish that he would attend the funeral of Lady Euphrasia, as one of the chief mourners.—Oscar declined the former; but promised, with a faltering voice, to comply with the latter request. He then retired; and the Marquis, who had been roused from the indulgence of his grief by a wish of preserving his character, again relapsed into wretchedness. He desired Oscar to make no secret of his being now heir to the Earl of Dunreath, and said he would mention it himself in his family. Through this medium, therefore, did this surprising intelligence reach Lord Mortimer; and his heart dilated with sudden joy, at the idea of his Amanda and her brother at last enjoying independence and prosperity.

In a few hours after this, the sufferings of Lord Cherbury were terminated: his last faltering accents pronounced blessings on his son. Oh, how sweet were those blessings! How different were the feelings of Lord Mortimer from the callous sons of dissipation, who seem to watch with impatience the last struggles of a parent, that they may have more extensive means of gratifying their inordinate desires! The feelings of Lord Mortimer were soothed, by reflecting he had done every thing in his power for restoring the tranquillity of his father; and his regret was lessened, by the conviction that Lord Cherbury, after the discovery of his conduct, could never more in this life have experienced happiness: he therefore, with tender piety, resigned him to his God, humbly trusting

trusting that his penitence had atoned for his frailties, and ensured him felicity.

He now bade adieu to the Castle and its wretched owners, and accompanied Lady Martha and his sister to Thornbury, at which the burying-place of the family lay. Here he continued till the remains of his father arrived, and were interred: he then proceeded to London, to put in execution the plan he had projected for his father. He immediately advertised the Tudor estate: a step of this kind could not be concealed from Lady Martha, but the mortgages on the other estates he resolved carefully to guard from her knowledge, lest suspicions prejudicial to the memory of his father should arise in her mind. But, during this period, the idea of Amanda was not absent from his soul—neither grief nor business could banish it a moment; and again a thousand fond and flattering hopes concerning her had revived, when a sudden blow dispersed them all, and plunged him, if possible, into greater wretchedness than he had ever before experienced. He heard it confidently reported, that the Earl of Dunreath's sister (for Oscar, by this time, had claimed, and been allowed to take, the title of his grandfather) was to be married to Sir Charles Bingley. The friendship which he knew subsisted between the Earl and Sir Charles, rendered this too probable; but if a doubt concerning it still lingered in his mind, it was destroyed, when Sir Charles waited on him to treat about the purchase of Tudor Hall, it instantly

instantly occurring that this purchase was made by the desire of Amanda. Unable to command his feelings, he referred Sir Charles to his agent, and abruptly retired. He called her cruel and ungrateful: after all his sufferings on her account, did he deserve so soon to be banished her remembrance, so soon supplanted in her affections by another, by one too who never had, who never would have, an opportunity of giving such proofs as he had done of constancy and love? "She is lost then!" he sighed; "she is lost for ever! Oh, what avails the vindication of her fame? is it not an augmentation of my misery? Oh, my father, of what a treasure did you despoil me! But let me not disturb the sacred ashes of the dead; rest, rest in peace, thou venerable author of my being; and may the involuntary expression of heart-rending anguish be forgiven! Amanda then," he continued, after a pause, "will indeed be mistress of Tudor Hall, but never will a sigh for him who once was its owner heave her bosom: she will wander beneath those shades, where so often she has heard my vows of unalterable love, vows which, alas! my heart has too fully observed, and listen to similar ones from Sir Charles! Well, this is the last stroke fate can level at my peace."

Lord Mortimer (or as, in future, we must style him, Lord Cherbury) had indeed imagined that the affections of Amanda, like his own, were unalterable; he had therefore indulged the rapturous idea, that, by again seeking an union with her, he should promote

promote the happiness of both. It is true, he knew she would possess a fortune infinitely superior to what he had now a right to expect; but, after the proofs he had given of disinterested attachment, not only she, but the world, he was convinced, would acquit him of any selfish motives in the renewal of his addresses. His hopes destroyed, his prospects blasted, by what he heard, he resolved as soon as his affairs were settled, to go abroad: the death of his father had rendered his entering the army unnecessary, and his spirits were too much broken, his health too much impaired, for him voluntarily now to embrace that destiny.

On the purchase of Tudor Hall being completed by Sir Charles, it was necessary for Lord Cherbury to see his steward: he preferred going to sending for him, prompted indeed by a melancholy wish of paying a last visit to Tudor Hall, endeared to his heart by a thousand fond remembrances. On his arrival, he took up his abode at the steward's for a day or two, after a strict injunction to him of concealing his being there. It was after a ramble through every spot about the demesne which he had ever trodden with Amanda, that he repaired to the library, and discovered her: he was ignorant of her being in the country. Oh, then, how great was his surprise, how exquisite his emotions, at her unexpected sight!

I shall not attempt to go over the scene I have already tried to describe; suffice it to say, that the desire

desire she betrayed of hastening from him, he imputed to the alteration her sentiments had undergone with regard to him and Sir Charles: when undeceived in this respect, his rapture was as great as ever it had been before at the idea of her love; and, like Amanda, he declared his sufferings were now amply rewarded.

CHAP. X.

"No, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true;
The sigh that rends thy constant heart,
Shall break thy lover's too."

"But, my love," cried Lord Cherbury, as he wiped away the tears which pity and horror, at the fate of Lady Euphrasia, had caused Amanda to shed, "will your brother, think you, sanction our happiness? Will he, who might aspire so high for a sister thus at once possessed of beauty and fortune, bestow her on one whose title may now almost be considered an empty one?"—"Oh, do not wrong his noble nature by such a doubt!" exclaimed Amanda: "yes, with pride, with pleasure, with delight, will he bestow his sister upon the esteemed, the beloved of her heart; upon him who, unwarped by narrow prejudice or selfish

selfish interest, sought her in the low shade of obscurity, to lay, all friendless and forlorn as she was, his fortune at her feet! Could he indeed be ungrateful for such kindness, could he attempt to influence me to another choice, my heart would, at once repulse the effort, and avow its fixed determination; but he is incapable of such conduct—my Oscar is all that is generous and feeling; need I say more, than that a spirit congenial to yours animates his breast." —Lord Cherbury clasped her to his heart: "Dearest, loveliest of human beings!" he exclaimed, "shall I at length call you mine? after all my sorrows, my difficulties, shall I indeed receive so precious a reward? Oh, wonder not, my Amanda, if I doubt the reality of so sudden a reverse of situation! I feel as if under the influence of a happy dream, but, good Heaven! a dream from which I should never wish to be awakened."

Amanda now recollected, that, if she staid much longer from the cottage, she should have some one coming in quest of her. She informed Lord Cherbury of this, and rose to depart; but he would not suffer her to depart alone, neither did she desire it.

The nurse and her daughter Betsy were in the cottage, at her return to it. To describe the surprise of the former at the appearance of Lord Cherbury, is impossible, a surprise mingled with indignation, at the idea of his falsehood to her darling child; but, when undeceived in that respect, her transports were of the most extravagant nature. Well, she thanked

thanked Heaven, she said, she should now see her dear child hold up her head again, and look as handsome as ever: aye, she had always doubted, she said, that his Lordship was not one of the false-hearted men she had so often heard her old grandmother talk of.—"My good nurse," said Lord Cherbury, smiling, "you will then give me your dear child with all your heart?"—"Aye, that I will, my Lort," she replied, "and this very moment too, if I could."—"Well," cried Amanda, "his Lordship will be satisfied, at present, with getting his dinner from you." She then desired the things to be brought to the little arbour, already described in the beginning of this book, and proceeded to it with Lord Cherbury.

The mention of dinner threw the nurse and her daughter into universal commotion. Good lack! how unfortunate it was, she had nothing hot or nice to lay before his Lortship! How could she think he could dine upon cold lamb and sallad? Well, this was all Miss Amanda's fault, who would never let her do as she wished.—With the utmost difficulty she was persuaded he could dine upon these things: the cloth was laid upon the flowery turf, beneath the spreading branches of the arbour; the delicacies of the dairy were added to their repast, and Betsy provided a dessert of new filberts. Never had Lord Cherbury partaken of so delicious a meal, never had he and Amanda experienced such happiness, a happiness derived from what might be termed the sober certainty

certainty of waking bliss. The pleasure, the tenderness of their souls, beamed in expressive glances from their eyes; and they were now more convinced than ever, that the humble scenes of life were best calculated for the promotion of felicity.

Lord Cherbury felt more reconciled than he had been before to the diminution of his fortune: he yet retained sufficient for the comforts, and many of the elegancies of life. The splendor he lost was insignificant in his eyes; his present situation proved happiness could be enjoyed without it; and he knew it equally disregarded by his Amanda. He asked himself,

> "What was the world to them,
> Its pomps, its pleasures, and its nonsense all,
> Who, in each other, clasp whatever fair
> High fancy forms, or lavish hearts can wish?"

All nature looked gay and smiling around him: he inhaled the balmy breath of opening flowers; and, through the verdant canopy he sat beneath, he saw the bright azure of the heavens, and felt the benignant influence of the sun, whose potent beams heightened, to glowing luxuriance, the beauties of the surrounding landscape. He expressed his feelings to Amanda; he heard her declare the similarity of hers, heard her, with all the sweet enthusiasm of a refined and animated mind, expatiate on the lovely scene around them. Oh, what tender remembrances did it awaken! and what delightful plans of felicity did they sketch! Lord Cherbury would hear from Amanda all she had suffered since their separation; and,

and, could his love and esteem have admitted increase, her patient endurance of the sorrows she related would have increased them.

They did not leave the garden till a dusky hue had overspread the landscape. Oh, with what emotions did Amanda watch the setting sun, whose rising beams she had beheld with eyes obscured by tears of sorrow!—As they sat at tea in the room, she could not avoid noticing the alteration in the nurse's dress, who attended; she had put on her holiday finery, and, to evince her wish of amusing her guests, had sent for the blind harper, whom she stationed outside the cottage. His music drew a number of the neighbouring cottagers about him, and they would soon have led up a dance in the vale, had not the nurse prevented them, lest they should disturb her guests: Lord Cherbury, however, insisted on their being gratified; and sending for his servant, ordered him to provide refreshments for them, and to reward the harper.

He would not leave Amanda till he had permission to come the next morning, as soon as he could hope to see her; accordingly, the first voice she heard on rising, was his chatting to the nurse. We may believe she did not spend many minutes at her toilet; the neat simplicity of her dress, indeed, never required she should do so; and in a very short time she joined him. They walked out till breakfast was ready,

> "Together trod the morning dews, and gather'd,
> In their prime, fresh blooming sweets."

Amanda,

Amanda, in hourly expectation of her brother's arrival, wished, ere he came, to inform the inhabitants of the cottage of the alteration of his fortune: this, with the assistance of Lord Cherbury, she took an opportunity of doing, in the course of the day, to the nurse; had she been sole relator, she feared she should have been overwhelmed with questions. Joy and wonder were excited, in an extreme degree, by this relation; and nothing but the nurse's hurry and impatience to communicate it to the family, could have prevented her from asking again and again a repetition of it.

Lord Cherbury now, as on the foregoing day, dined with Amanda. Her expectations relative to the speedy arrival of her brother, were not disappointed: while sitting after dinner, with Lord Cherbury, in the garden, the nurse, half breathless, came running to tell them, that a superb coach-and-four, which, to pe sure, must be my Lort Dunreath's, was coming down the road.—Lord Cherbury coloured with emotion. Amanda did not wish he and her brother should meet, till she had explained every thing relative to him: by her desire, he retired to the valley, to which a winding path from the garden descended, whilst she hurried to the cottage, to receive and welcome her beloved brother. Their meeting was at once tender and affecting: the faithful Edwins surrounded Oscar with delight and rapture, pouring forth, in their simple style, congratulations on his happy fortune, and their wishes for his

his long enjoying it. He thanked them with a starting tear of sensibility: he assured them, that their attentions to his dear sister, his lamented parents, his infant years, entitled them to a lasting gratitude. As soon as he and Amanda could disengage themselves from the good creatures, without wounding their feelings, they retired to her room, where Oscar related, as we have already done, all that passed between him and the Marquis of Rosline.

As soon as the funeral of Lady Euphrasia was over, the Marquis, according to his promise, settled every thing with him, and put him into formal possession of Dunreath Abbey. By the Marquis's desire, he then waited upon Lady Dunreath, to inform her she was at liberty, and to request she would not contradict the assertion of having been abroad. Mrs. Bruce had previously informed her of the revolution of affairs. "I own," continued Oscar, "from her cruelty to my mother, and the depravity of her conduct, I was strongly prejudiced against her, attributing, I acknowledge, her doing justice to us, in some degree, to her resentment against the Marquis: but the moment I entered her apartment, this prejudice vanished, giving place to the softer emotions of pity and tenderness, while a thorough conviction of her sincere repentance broke upon my soul. Though prepared to see a form reduced by affliction and confinement, I was not by any means prepared to see a form so emaciated, so deathlike. A faint motion of her head,

as I entered, alone proved her existence. Had the world been given me to do so, I think I could not have broken a silence so awful. At length she spoke; and in language that pierced my heart, implored my forgiveness for the sufferings she had caused me to endure. Repeatedly I assured her of it: but this rather heightened, than diminished, her agitation; and tears and sobs spoke the anguish of her soul. 'I have lived,' she cried, 'to justify the ways of Providence to men; and prove, that however calamity may oppress the virtuous, they or their descendants shall at last flourish—I have lived to see my contrite wish accomplished, and the last summons will now be a welcome release.' She expressed an ardent desire to see her daughter. 'The pitying tears of a mother,' she exclaimed, 'may be as balm to her wounded heart. Oh, my prophetic words, how often have I prayed, that the punishment I then denounced against her might be averted!' I signified her desire," continued Oscar, "to the Marquis. He found the Marchioness at first reluctant to it, from a secret dread, I suppose, of seeing an object so injured: but she at last consented; and I was requested to bring back Lady Dunreath from the Abbey, and conduct her to the Marchioness's room. I will not attempt to describe the scene which passed, between affliction on one hand, and penitence on the other: the Marchioness indeed seemed truly penitent—remorse and horror were visible in her countenance, as she gazed upon her

her injured parent. I begged Lady Dunreath, if agreeable to her, still to consider the Abbey as her residence: this, however, she declined; and it was determined she should continue with her daughter. Her last moments may, perhaps, be soothed by closing in the presence of her child; but till then, I think, her wretchedness must be aggravated, by beholding that of the Marquis and his wife—their's is that situation where comfort can neither be offered nor suggested: hopeless and incurable is their sorrow; for, to use the beautiful and emphatic words of a late celebrated writer, 'The gates of death are shut upon their prospects."

Amanda now, after a little hesitation, proceeded to inform Oscar of her real situation; and entreated him to believe, that she never would have had a concealment from him, but for the fear of giving him uneasiness. He folded her to his bosom as she ceased speaking, declaring he rejoiced and congratulated her on having found an object so well qualified to make her happy. "But where is this dear creature?" cried Oscar, with some gaiety; "am I to search for him, like a favourite sylph, in your bouquet? or, with more probability of success, seek him amongst the shades of the garden? Come," said he, "your looks confess our search will not be troublesome." He led her to the garden. Lord Cherbury, who had lingered near it, saw them approaching. Amanda motioned to him to meet them. He sprang forward, and was instantly introduced

by her to Lord Dunreath. The reception he met from him, was, perhaps, one of the most flattering proofs he could receive of his Amanda's affection; for what but the most animated expressions in his favour, could have made Lord Dunreath, at the first introduction, address him with all the fervency of friendship? Extremes of joy and sorrow are difficult to describe; I shall therefore, as perfectly conscious of my inability to do justice to the scene which followed this introduction, pass it over in silence. Lord Dunreath had ordered his equipage and attendants to the village inn, where he himself intended to lodge; but this was prevented by Lord Cherbury, who informed him he could be accommodated at his steward's; it was here, when they had retired for the night, that Lord Cherbury, having intimated his wishes for an immediate union with Amanda, all the necessary preliminaries were talked over and adjusted; and it was agreed the marriage should take place at the cottage, from whence they should immediately proceed to Lady Martha's; and that, to procure a licence, they should both depart the next morning. At breakfast, therefore, Amanda was apprized of their plan; and though the glow of modesty overspread her face, she did not, with affectation, object to it. With greater expedition than Amanda expected, the travellers returned from the journey they had been obliged to take; and at their earnest and united request, without any affectation of modesty, though with all its real feelings, Amanda

consented

consented that the marriage should take place the next day but one after their return.

Howell was sent for, and informed of the hour his services would be required. His mild eyes evinced to Amanda his sincere joy at the termination of her sorrows.

On the destined morning, Lord Dunreath and his friend went over to the cottage; and in a few minutes were joined by their Amanda, the perfect model of innocence and beauty. She looked, indeed, the child of sweet simplicity, arrayed with the unstudied elegance of a village maid; she had no ornaments but those which could never decay, namely, modesty and meekness.

Language was inadequate to express the feelings of Lord Cherbury; his fine eyes alone could do them justice, alone reveal what might be termed the sacred triumph of his soul at gaining such a woman. A soft shade of melancholy stole over the fine features of Lord Dunreath, as he witnessed the happiness of Lord Cherbury; for as his happiness, so might his own have been, but for the blackest perfidy.

As Lord Cherbury took the trembling hand of Amanda, to lead her from the cottage, she gave a farewell sigh to a place, where, it might be said, her happiness had commenced, and was completed.

They walked to the church, followed by the nurse and her family. Some kind hand had strewed Lady Malvina's grave with the gayest flowers; and

when Amanda reached it, she paused involuntarily, for a moment, to invoke the spirits of her parents to bless her union.

Howell was already in the church, waiting to receive them; and the ceremony was begun without delay. With the truest pleasure did Lord Dunreath give his lovely sister to Lord Cherbury; and with the liveliest transport did he receive her, as the choicest gift Heaven could bestow.

Tears of sweet sensibility fell from Amanda, as Lord Cherbury folded her to his bosom as his own Amanda. Nor was he less affected: joy, of the most rapturous kind, agitated his whole soul, at the completion of an event so earnestly desired, but so long despaired of. He wiped away her tears; and when she had received the congratulations of her brother, presented her to the rest of the little group. Their delight, particularly the nurse's, was almost too great for expression. "Well," she said, sobbing, "thank Cot, her wish was fulfilled! it had peen her prayer, night, noon, and morn, to see the taughter of her tear, tear Captain Fitzalan greatly married."

Poor Ellen wept. "Well, now she should be happy," she said, "since she knew her tear young laty was so."

Amanda, affected by the artless testimonies of affection she received, could only smile upon the faithful creatures. Lord Cherbury, seeing her unable to

to speak, took her hand, and said, "Lady Cherbury would never forget the obligations conferred upon Miss Fitzalan."

Bridal favours and presents had already been distributed among the Edwins. Howell was handsomely complimented on the occasion, and received some valuable presents from Lord Cherbury, as proofs of his sincere friendship; also money to distribute among the indigent villagers.

His Lordship then handed Amanda into his coach, already prepared for its journey to Thornbury; and the little bridal party were followed with the most ardent blessings.

After proceeding a quarter of a mile, they reached Tudor Hall. "I wish, my Lord," cried Oscar, as they were driving round the wood, "you would permit me to stop, and view the Hall, and also accompany me to it." Lord Cherbury looked a little embarrassed: he felt a strong reluctance to visit it, when no longer his; yet he could not think of refusing the Earl. Amanda knew his feelings, and wished her brother had not made such a request. No opposition, however, being shewn to it, they stopped at the great gate, which opened into the avenue, and alighted. This was a long beautiful walk cut through the wood, and in a direct line with the house. On either side were little grassy banks, now covered with a profusion of gay flowers, and a thick row of trees, which, waving their old fantastic branches on high, formed a most de-

lightful shade. Honeysuckles twined around many of the trunks, forming, in some places, luxuriant canopies, and with a variety of aromatic shrubs, quite perfumed the air. It was yet an early hour; the dew, therefore, still sparkled upon the grass, and every thing looked in the highest verdure. Through vistas in the wood, a fine clear river was seen; along whose sides beautiful green slopes were stretched, scattered over with flocks, that spread their swelling treasures to the sun. The birds sung sweetly in the embowering recesses of the wood; and so calm, so lovely did the place appear, that Lord Cherbury could not refrain a sigh for its loss. "How delighted," cried he, casting his fine eyes around, "should I have been, still to have cherished those old trees, beneath whose shades some of my happiest hours were passed!" They entered the Hall, whose folding doors they found open. It was large and Gothic: a row of arched windows were on either side, whose recesses were filled with myrtles, roses, and geraniums, which emitted a delicious perfume, and, contrasted with the white walls, gave an appearance of the greatest gaiety to the place. Oscar led the way to a spacious parlour at the end of the hall; but how impossible to describe the surprise and pleasure of Lord and Lady Cherbury, on entering it, at beholding Lady Martha and Lady Araminta Dormer! Lord Cherbury stood transfixed like a statue. The caresses of his aunt and his sister, which were shared between him

and

and his bride, restored him to animation; but while he returned them, he cast his eyes upon Oscar, and demanded an explanation of the scene. "I shall give no explanation, my Lord," cried Oscar, "till you welcome your friends to your house."—"My house!" repeated Lord Cherbury, staring at him. Lord Dunreath approached. Never had he appeared so engaging; the benignant expression his countenance assumed, was such as we may suppose an angel sent from Heaven, on benevolent purposes, to man, would wear. "Excuse me, my dear Cherbury," said he, "for suffering you, for a moment, to feel any uneasiness which I could remove; I only did so from an idea of increasing your pleasure hereafter. In Scotland I was informed of your predilection for my sister by Lady Greystock, who, I fancy, you have both some reason to remember: in consequence of which, on seeing Tudor Hall advertised, I begged Sir Charles Bingley to purchase it for me, in his own name, from a presentiment I had, that the event I now rejoice at would take place, and from my wish of having a nuptial present for my sister, worthy of her acceptance. Let me," continued he, talking a hand of each, and joining them together, "let me, in this respected mansion, and in the dear presence of those you love, again wish you a continuance of every blessing. May this seat, as heretofore, be the scene of domestic happiness! may it ever be a pleasing abode to the prosperous, and an asylum of comfort to the

afflicted!"—Lord Cherbury's heart was too full for words; he turned aside, to wipe away his starting tears: at last, though in a broken voice, he said, "I cannot speak my feelings."—"Pain me not," cried Oscar, "by attempting to do so. From this moment forget that Tudor Hall was ever out of your possession; or, if you must remember it, think it restored to you with an incumbrance which half the fashionable men in England would give an estate to get rid of; and this will conquer your too refined feelings." Lord Cherbury smiled as he looked at the lovely incumbrance which Oscar alluded to. "And what shall I say to my brother?" cried Amanda, throwing herself into his arms.—"Why, that you will compose your spirits, and endeavour to give a proper welcome to your friends." He presented her to Lady Martha and Lady Araminta, who again embraced and congratulated her; he then led her to the head of the breakfast-table, which was elegantly laid out. The timid bride was assisted in doing the honours by her brother and Lord Cherbury. Lady Martha beheld the youthful pair with the truest delight; never had she before seen two, from equal merit and loveliness, so justly formed to make each other happy—never had she seen either to such advantage: the beautiful colouring of health and modesty tinged the soft cheeks of Amanda, and her eyes, through their long lashes, emitted mild beams of pleasure; its brightest glow mantled the cheeks of Lord Cherbury, and his eyes were

were again illumined with all their wonted radiancy. Oscar was requested to tell particularly how he had arranged his plan, which he accordingly did. He had written to the ladies at Thornbury, informing them of his scheme, and requested their presence; and on the preceding night, they had arrived at the Hall. Lord Dunreath also added, that, from a certainty of its being agreeable to Lord Cherbury, he had directed the steward to reinstate the old servants in their former stations, and also to invite the tenants to a nuptial feast. Lord Cherbury assured him he had done what was truly grateful to his feelings.

A ramble about the garden and shrubberies was proposed and agreed to, after breakfast. In the Hall and avenue, the servants were already assembled. Lord Cherbury went among them all; and the grateful joy they expressed at having him again for a master and a landlord, deeply affected his feelings. He thanked them for their regard; and received their congratulations on his present happiness, with that sweetness and affability which ever distinguished his manners. The ramble was delightful. When the sun had attained its meridian, they sought the cool shade, and retired to little romantic arbours, overcanopied with woodbine, where, as if by the hand of enchantment, they found refreshments laid out. They did not return to the house till they received a summons to dinner; and had then the pleasure of seeing the tenants seated at long

tables in the wood, enjoying, with unbounded mirth, the profusion with which they were covered: and Lord Cherbury begged Amanda to observe her nurse, seated at the head of one of these tables, with an air of the greatest self-importance. The pride and vanity of this good woman (and she always possessed a large share of both) had been considerably increased, from the time her cottage was honoured with such noble guests. When she received an invitation from the steward to accompany the rest of the tenants to the Hall, to celebrate its restoration to Lord Cherbury, her joy and exultation knew no bounds. She took care to walk with the wives of some of the most respectable tenants, describing to them all that had passed at the ceremony, and how the Earl had first fallen in love with his bride at her cottage; and what trials they had undergone, no doubt, to prove their constancy. "Cot pless their hearts," she said to her eager auditors, "she could tell them of such tangers, and tifficulties, and tribulations, as would surprise the very souls in their poties. Well, well, it is now her tear child's turn to hold up her head with the highest in the land: and, to pe sure, she might now say, without telling a lie, that her tear Latyship would now make some poty of herself; and, please Cot, she hoped and believed, she would not tisgrace or tisparage a petter situation." When she came near the Countess, she took care to press forward for a gracious look: but this was not all—she had always

always envied the consequence of Mrs. Abergwilly, in having so great a house as the Hall entirely under her management; and she now determined, upon the strength of her favour with Lady Cherbury, to have something to say to it, and, of course, increase her consequence among her neighbours. There was nothing on earth she so much delighted in as bustle; and the present scene was quite adapted to her taste, for all within and without the house was joyous confusion. The first specimen she gave of her intention was, in helping to distribute refreshments among the tenants. She then proceeded to the dinner-parlour, to give her opinion, and assistance, and direction about laying out the table. Mrs. Abergwilly, like the generality of those accustomed to absolute power, could not tamely submit to any innovation of it. She curbed her resentment, however, and civilly told Mrs. Edwin she wanted no assistance. "Thank Cot," she said, "she was not come to this time of tay, without peing able to give proper tirections about laying out a table."—Mrs. Edwin said, "To be sure, Mrs. Abergwilly might have a very pretty taste, but then another person might have as good a one." The day was intensely hot. She pinned back her gown, which was a rich silk, that had belonged to Lady Malvina, and without further ceremony, began altering the dishes, saying, "She knew the taste of her tear laty, the Countess, petter than any one else, and that she would take an early opportunity of going through the

the apartments, and telling Mrs. Abergwilly how to arrange the furniture." The Welch blood of the housekeeper could bear no more, and she began abusing Mrs. Edwin, though in terms scarcely articulate; to which she replied with interest. In the midst of this fracas old Edwin entered. "For the love of Cot," he asked, "and the mercy of Heaven, could they choose no other time or tay than the present to pegin to fight, and scold, and abuse each other, like a couple of Welch witches? What would the noble Earl and the Countess say? Oh Lort! oh Lort! he felt himself blushing all over for their misdemeanours." His remonstrance had an immediate effect. They were both ashamed of their conduct, their rage abated, they became friends; and Mrs. Edwin resigned the direction of the dinner-table to Mrs. Abergwilly, satisfied with being allowed to preside among the tenants.

The bridal party found Howell in the dining-parlour, and his company increased their pleasure.

After dinner the rustics commenced dancing in the avenue to the strains of the harp, and afforded a delightful scene of innocent gaiety to their benevolent entertainers, who smiled to see

> The dancing pair, that simply sought renown,
> By holding out to tire each other down.
> The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
> The matron's glance, that would those looks reprove.

After tea the party went out among them, and the gentlemen for a short time mingled in the dance.

Long

Long it could not detain Lord Cherbury from his Amanda. Oh, with what ecstacy did he listen to the soft accents of her voice, while his fond heart assured him she was now his! The remembrance of past difficulties but increased his present felicity.

In the course of the week, all the neighbouring families came to pay their congratulations at Tudor Hall. Invitations were given and received, and it again became the seat of pleasure and hospitality. But Amanda did not suffer the possession of happiness to obliterate one grateful remembrance from her mind. She was not one of those selfish beings, who, on being what is termed settled for life, immediately contract themselves within the narrow sphere of their own enjoyments; still was her heart as sensible as ever to the glow of friendship and compassion. She wrote to all the friends she had ever received kindnesses from, in terms of the warmest gratitude; and her letters were accompanied by presents sufficiently valuable to prove her sincerity. She sent an invitation to Emily Rushbrook, which was immediately accepted; and now a discovery took place, which infinitely surprised and pleased Amanda, namely, that Howell was the young clergyman Emily was attached to. He had gone to London, on a visit to the gentleman who patronised him. Her youth, her simplicity, above all, her distress, affected his heart; and, in the hope of mitigating that distress (which he was shocked to see had been aggravated by the ladies she came to), he had

had followed her. To sooth the wretched, to relieve the distressed, was not considered more a duty than a pleasure by Howell; and the little favours he conferred upon the Rushbrooks afforded, if possible, more pleasure to him than they did to them—so sweet are the feelings of benevolence and virtue! But compassion was not long the sole motive of his interest in their affairs—the amiable manners, the gentle conversation of Emily, completely subdued his unfortunate passion for Amanda; and in stealing her image from his heart, she implanted her own in its place. He described, in a romantic manner, the little rural cottage he invited her to share; he anticipated the happy period when it should become an asylum to her parents, when he, like a second father, should assist their children through the devious paths of life. These fond hopes and expectations vanished the moment he received Mrs. Connel's letter. He could not think of sacrificing the interest of Rushbrook to the consideration of his own happiness; and therefore generously, but with the most agonizing conflicts, resigned his Emily to a more prosperous rival. His joy at finding her disengaged, still his own unaltered Emily, can better be conceived than described. He pointed out the little sheltered cottage, which again he hoped she would share, and blessed with her the hand that had opened her father's prison-gates. Lord and Lady Cherbury were delighted to think they could contribute to the felicity of two such amiable beings; and the latter

wrote

wrote to Captain and Mrs. Rushbrook on the subject, who immediately replied to her letter, declaring that their fondest wish would be gratified in bestowing their daughter on Howell. They were accordingly invited to the Hall; and in the same spot where, a month before, he ratified the vows of Lord Cherbury and Amanda, did Howell plight his own to Emily, who, from the hand of Lady Cherbury, received a nuptial present, sufficient to procure every enjoyment her humble and unassuming spirit aspired to. Her parents, after passing a few days in her cottage, departed, rejoicing at the happiness of their beloved child, and truly grateful to those who had contributed to it.

And now did the grateful children of Fitzalan amply reward the Edwins for their past kindnesses to their parents and themselves. An annual stipend was settled on Edwin by Lord Dunreath, and the possessions of Ellen were enlarged by Amanda. Now was realized every scheme of domestic happiness she had ever formed; but even that happiness could not alleviate her feelings on Oscar's account, whose faded cheek, whose languid eye, whose total abstraction in the midst of company, evidently proved the state of his heart: and the tear of regret, which had so often fallen for her own sorrows, was now shed for his. He had written to Mrs. Marlowe a particular account of every thing which had befallen him since their separation. She answered his letter immediately; and, after congratulating him in the warmest

warmest terms on the change in his situation, informed him, that Adela was then at one of Belgrave's seats in England, and that he was gone to the Continent. Her style was melancholy, and she concluded her letter in these words: "No longer, my dear Oscar, is my fireside enlivened by gaiety or friendship; sad and solitary I sit within my cottage, till my heart sickens at the remembrance of past scenes; and if I wander from it, the objects without, if possible, add to the bitterness of that remembrance. The closed windows, the grass-grown paths, the dejected servants, of Woodlawn, all recall to my mind those hours when it was the mansion of hospitality and pleasure. I often linger by the grave of the General; my tears fall upon it, and I think of that period, when, like him, I shall drop into it. But my last hours will not close like his; no tender child will bend over my pillow, to catch my last sigh, to sooth my last pang: in vain my closing eyes will look for the pious drops of nature, or of friendship. Unfriended I shall die, with the sad consciousness of doing so through my own means; but I shall not be quite unmourned—you and my Adela, the sweet daughter of my care, will regret the being whose sympathy for you both can only be obliterated with life."

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

The modest virtues mingled in her eyes,
Still on the ground, dejected, darting all
Their humid beams into the opening flowers;
Or when she thought
Of what her faithless fortune promis'd once,
They, like the dewy star
Of evening, shone in tears. THOMSON.

ADELA, on the death of her father, was taken by Belgrave to England; though the only pleasure he experienced in removing her, was derived from the idea of wounding her feelings, by separating her from Mrs. Marlowe, whom he knew she was tenderly attached to. From his connexions in London, she was compelled to mix in society—compelled, I say, for the natural gaiety of her soul was quite gone, and that solitude, which permitted her to brood over the remembrance of past days, was the only happiness she was capable of enjoying. When the terrors of Belgrave drove him from the kingdom, he had her removed to Woodhouse, to which, it may be remembered, he had once brought Amanda, and from which the imperious woman who then ruled was removed: but the principal domestic was equally harsh and insolent in her manner; and to her care the

the unfortunate Adela was consigned, with strict orders that she should not be allowed to receive any company, or correspond with any being. Accustomed, from her earliest youth, to the greatest tenderness, this severity plunged her in the deepest despondency, and life was a burthen she would gladly have resigned. Her melancholy, or rather her patient sweetness, at last softened the flinty nature of her governante, and she was permitted to extend her walks beyond the gardens, to which they had hitherto been confined; but she availed herself of this permission only to visit the churchyard belonging to the hamlet, whose old yew-trees she had often seen waving from the windows. Beneath their solemn gloom she loved to sit, while evening closed around her; and in a spot sequestered from every human eye, weep over the recollection of that father she had lost, that friend she was separated from.

She remained in the churchyard one night beyond her usual hour. The soft beams of the moon alone prevented her from being involved in darkness, and the plaintive breathings of a flute from the hamlet just stole upon her ear. Lost in sadness, her head resting upon her hand, she forgot the progress of time, when suddenly she beheld a form rising from a neighbouring grave. She started up, screamed, but had no power to move. The form advanced to her. It was the figure of a venerable man, who gently exclaimed, "Be not afraid." His voice dissipated the involuntary fears of Adela, but still she trembled

trembled so much, she could not move. "I thought," cried he, gazing on her, "this place had been alone the haunt of wretchedness and me."—"If sacred to sorrow," exclaimed Adela, "I may well claim the privilege of entering it."—She spoke involuntarily, and her words seemed to affect the stranger deeply. "So young," said he, "it is melancholy indeed; but still the sorrows of youth are more bearable than those of age, because, like age, it has not outlived the fond ties, the sweet connexions, of life."—"Alas!" cried Adela, unable to repress her feelings, "I am separated from all I regarded."—The stranger leaned pensively against a tree for a few minutes, and then again addressed her: "'Tis a late hour," said he; "suffer me to conduct you home, and also permit me to ask if I may see you here to-morrow night. Your youth, your manner, your dejection, all interest me deeply: the sorrows of youth are often increased by imagination. You will say that nothing can exceed its pains; 'tis true, but it is a weakness to yield to them—a weakness, which, from a sensible mind, will be eradicated the moment it hears of the real calamities of life: such a relation I can give you, if you meet me to-morrow night in this sad, this solitary spot—a spot I have visited every closing evening, without ever before meeting a being in it."—His venerable looks, his gentle, his pathetic manner, affected Adela inexpressibly. She gazed on him with emotions somewhat similar to those with which she used to contemplate the mild features

features of her father. "I will meet you," cried she; "but my sorrows are not imaginary." She refused to let him attend her home; and in this incident there was something affecting and romantic, which soothed and engrossed her mind.

She was punctual the next evening to the appointed hour. The stranger was already in the churchyard; he seated her at the head of the grave from which she had seen him rise the preceding night, and which was only distinguished from the others by a few flowering shrubs planted round it, and began his promised narrative. He had not proceeded far, ere Adela began to tremble with emotion; as he continued, it increased. At last, suddenly catching his hand with wildness, she exclaimed, "She lives! the wife so bitterly lamented, still lives a solitary mourner, for your sake! oh, never, never did she injure you, as you suppose! Oh, dear, inestimable Mrs. Marlowe, what happiness to the child of your care, to think, that, through her means, you will regain the being you have so tenderly regretted—regain him with a heart open to receive you!"—The deep convulsive sobs of her companion now pierced her ear: for many minutes he was unable to speak; at last, raising his eyes, "Oh, Providence, I thank thee!" he exclaimed: "again shall my arms fold to my heart its best beloved object. Oh, my Fanny, how have I injured thee! Learn from me," he continued, turning to Adela, "oh, learn from me never to yield to rashness! had I allowed myself

time

time to inquire into the particulars of my wife's conduct; had I resisted, instead of obeying, the violence of passion, what years of lingering misery should I have saved us both! But tell me where I shall find my solitary mourner, as you call her?" Adela gave him the desired information, and also told him her own situation. "The wife of Belgrave!" he repeated; "then I wonder not," continued he, as if involuntary, "at your sorrows!" It was indeed to Howell, the unfortunate father of Juliana, the regretted husband of Mrs. Marlowe, that Adela had been addressing herself. He checked himself, however, and told her, that the being by whose grave they sat had been hurried, through the villany of Belgrave, to that grave. Adela told him of the prohibition against her writing; but at the same time assured him, ere the following night, she would find an opportunity of addressing a letter, which he should convey, to Mrs. Marlowe, who, by its contents, would be prepared for his appearance, as it was to be sent in to her. But Adela was prevented from putting her intention into execution, by an event as solemn as unexpected.

The ensuing morning she was disturbed from her sleep by a violent noise in the house, as of people running backwards and forwards in confusion and distress. She was hurrying on her clothes, to go and inquire into the occasion of it, when a servant rushed into the room, and in a hasty manner, told her that Colonel Belgrave was dead. Struck with horror

horror and amazement, Adela stood petrified, gazing on her; the maid repeated her words, and added, that he had died abroad, and his remains were brought over to Woodhouse for interment, attended by a French gentleman, who looked like a priest. The various emotions which assailed the heart of Adela at this moment, were too much for her weak frame, and she would have fallen to the floor, but for the maid. It was some time ere she recovered her sensibility; and when she did regain it, she was still so agitated, as to be unable to give those directions which the domestics, who now looked up to her in a light very different from what they had hitherto done, demanded from her. All she could desire was, that the steward should pay every respect and attention to the gentleman who had attended the remains of his master, and have every honour that was due shewn to those remains. To suppose she regretted Belgrave, would be unnatural; but she felt horror, mingled with a degree of pity, for his untimely fate, at the idea of his dying abroad, without one connexion, one friend near him.

His last moments were, indeed, more wretched than she could conceive. Overwhelmed with terror and grief, he had quitted England—terror at the supposition of a crime, which, in reality, he had not committed, and grief for the fate of Amanda. He sought to lose his horrors in inebriety; but this, joined to the agitations of his mind, brought on a violent fever by the time he had landed at Calais, in the

the paroxysms of which, had the attendants understood his language, they would have been shocked at the crimes he revealed. His senses were restored a short time before he died; but what excruciating anguish, as well as horror, did he suffer from their restoration! he knew, from his own feelings, as well as from the looks of his attendants, that his last moments were approaching; and the recollection of past actions made him shudder at those moments. Oh, Howell, now were you amply revenged for all the pangs he made you suffer! Now did the pale image of your shrouded Juliana seem to stand beside his bed, reproaching his barbarity. Every treacherous action now rose to view; and trembling, he groaned with terror at the spectres which a guilty conscience raised around him. Death would have been a release, could he have considered it an annihilation of all existence; but that future world he had always derided—that world was opening, in all its awful horrors, to his view. Already he saw himself before its sacred Judge, surrounded by the accusing spirits of those he had injured. He desired a clergyman to be brought to him. A priest was sent for; their faiths were different, but still, as a man of God, Belgrave applied to him for an alleviation of his tortures. The priest was superstitious; and ere he tried to comfort, he wished to convert: but scarcely had he commenced the attempt, ere the wretched being before him clapsed his hands together in a strong convulsion, and ex-

pired. The English servant who attended Belgrave informed the people of the hotel of his rank and fortune; and the priest offered to accompany his remains to England. He was, by the direction of Adela, who had not resolution to see him, amply rewarded for his attention; and in two days after their arrival at Woodhouse, the remains of Belgrave were consigned to their kindred earth. From a sequestered corner of the churchyard, Howell witnessed their interment. When all had departed, he approached the grave of his daughter. "He is gone!" he exclaimed; "my Juliana, your betrayer is gone! At the tribunal of his God, he now answers for his cruelty to you! But, oh, may he find mercy from that God! may he pardon him, as, in this solemn moment, I have done! My enmity lives not beyond the grave."

Adela now sent for Howell; and after their first emotions had subsided, informed him she meant immediately to return to Ireland: the expectation of her doing so had alone prevented his going before. They accordingly commenced their journey the ensuing day; and in less than a week reached the dear and destined spot, so interesting to both: they had previously settled on the manner in which the discovery should be revealed to Mrs. Marlowe, and Adela went alone into her cottage. Sad and solitary, as Mrs. Marlowe said in her letter to Oscar, did Adela find her in her parlour; but it was a sadness which vanished the moment she beheld her.

With

With all the tenderness of a mother, she clasped Adela to her breast; and, in the sudden transports of joy and surprise, for many minutes did not notice her dress: but when she did observe it, what powerful emotions did it excite in her breast! Adela, scarcely less agitated than she was, could not, for many minutes, relate all that had happened; at last, the idea of the state in which she had left Howell made her endeavour to compose herself. Mrs. Marlowe wept while she related her sufferings; but when she mentioned Howell, surprise suspended her tears —a surprise increased when she began the story: but when she came to that part where she herself had betrayed such emotion, while listening to Howell, Mrs. Marlowe started, and turned pale. "Your feelings are similar to mine," said Adela: "at this period I became agitated; yes," she continued, "it was at this period I laid my trembling hand on his, and exclaimed, 'She lives!"—"Merciful Heaven!" cried Mrs. Marlowe, "what do you mean?"—"Oh, let me now," cried Adela, clasping her arms around her, "repeat to you the same expression! He lives; that husband, so beloved and regretted, lives!"—"Oh, bring him to me!" said Mrs. Marlowe, in a faint voice; "let me behold him while I have reason left to enjoy the blessing!" —Adela flew from the room. Howell was near the door. He approached, he entered the room, he tottered forward, and in one moment was at the feet, and in the arms, of his wife, who, transfixed

to the chair, could only open her arms to receive him. The mingled pain and pleasure of such a reunion cannot be described; both, with tears of grateful transport, blessed the Power which had given such comfort to their closing days. "But my children," exclaimed Mrs. Marlowe, suddenly; "ah! when shall I behold my children? why did they not accompany you? ah, did they deem me then unworthy of bestowing a mother's blessing?" Howell trembled, and turned pale. "I see," said Mrs. Marlowe, interpreting his emotion, "I am a wife, but not a mother."—Howell, recovering his fortitude, took her hand, and pressed it to his bosom. "Yes," he replied, "you are a mother; one dear, one amiable child remains, Heaven be praised!" He paused, and a tear fell to the memory of Juliana; "but Heaven," he resumed, "has taken the other to its eternal rest. Inquire not concerning her at present, I entreat; soon will I conduct you to her grave; there will I relate her fate, and together will we mourn it: then shall the tears that never yet bedewed the grave—the precious tears of a mother, embalm her sacred dust." Mrs. Marlowe wept, but she complied with her husband's request. She inquired, in a broken voice, about her son; and the knowledge of his happiness gradually cheered her mind.

Adela consented to stay that night in the cottage, but the next day she determined on going to Woodlawn. To think she should again wander through it,

it, again linger in the walks she had trodden with those she loved, gave to her mind a melancholy pleasure. The next morning, attended by her friends, she repaired to it ; and was inexpressibly affected by reviewing scenes endeared by the tender remembrance of happier hours. The house, from its closed windows, appeared quite neglected and melancholy, as if pleasure had forsaken it with the poor departed General. Standard, his favourite horse, grazed in the lawn ; and beside him, as if a secret sympathy endeared them to each other, stood the dog that had always attended the General in his walks : it instantly recollected Adela ; and running to her, licked her hand, and evinced the utmost joy. She patted him on the head, while her tears burst forth at the idea of him who had been his master. The transports of the old domestics, particularly of the grey-headed butler, at her unexpected return, increased her tears : but when she entered the parlour in which her father usually sat, she was quite overcome; and motioning with her hand for her friends not to mind her, she retired to the garden. There was a little romantic root-house at the termination of it, where she and Oscar had passed many happy hours together; thither she repaired, and his idea thus revived in her mind, did not lessen its dejection. While she sat within it, indulging her sorrow, her eye caught some lines inscribed on one of its windows. She hastily arose ;

and examining them, instantly recollected the hand of Oscar. They were as follow :—

"Adieu, sweet girl! a last adieu!
We part, to meet no more;
Adieu to peace, to hope, to you,
And to my native shore!

If fortune had propitious smil'd,
My love had made me bless'd;
But she, like me, is sorrow's child,
By sadness dire oppress'd.

I go to India's sultry clime,
Oh, never to return!
Beneath some lone embow'ring lime
Will be thy soldier's urn.

No kindred spirit there shall weep,
Or, pensive musing, stray;
My image thou alone wilt keep,
And grief's soft tribute pay."

Oscar, previous to his going to England, with the expectation of being sent to the West Indies, had paid a secret visit to Woodlawn, to review and bid adieu to every well-known and beloved spot; and had one morning, at early day, inscribed those lines on a window in the root-house, prompted by a tender melancholy he could not resist.

"His love is then unfortunate," said Adela, pensively leaning her head upon her hand: "Oh, Oscar, how sad a similitude is there between your fate and mine!"—She returned to the house; Mr. and Mrs. Howell (for so we shall, in future, call Mr. and Mrs. Marlowe, that name being only assumed while her

her husband had a prospect of inheriting his uncle's fortune) had consented to stay some time with her; Oscar's lines ran in her head the whole day, and, in the evening, she again stole out to read them.

She had been absent some time, when Mrs. Howell came out to her: Adela blushed, and started, at being caught at the window.—"'Tis a long time, my dear Adela," said Mrs. Howell, "since we had a ramble in this delightful garden together; indulge me in taking one, and let us talk of past times."—"Past times," cried Adela, with a faint smile, "are not always the pleasantest to talk about."—"There are some, at least one friend," cried Mrs. Howell, "whom you have not yet inquired after."—Adela's heart suddenly palpitated; she guessed who that friend was.—"Oscar Fitzalan surely," continued Mrs. Howell, "merits an inquiry. I have good news to tell you of him, therefore, without chiding you for any seeming neglect, I will reveal it." She accordingly related his late reverse of situation.—Adela heard her with deep attention: "Since fortune then is propitious at last," cried she, "his love will no longer be unfortunate." "'Tis time indeed," said Mrs. Howell, looking at her with pleasure, "that love so pure, so constant as his, should be rewarded. Oh, Adela!" she continued, suddenly taking her hand, "sweet daughter of my care, how great is my happiness at this moment, to think of that about to be your portion!" "My happiness!" exclaimed Adela, in a dejected

voice.—"Yes," replied Mrs. Howell, "in your union with a man every way worthy of possessing you, a man who, from the first moment he beheld you, has never ceased to love you; in short, with Oscar Fitzalan himself."—"Impossible!" cried Adela, trembling with emotion as she spoke: "Did not—how humiliating is the remembrance!—did not Oscar Fitzalan reject me, when the too generous and romantic spirit of my beloved father offered my hand to his acceptance?"—"For once," said Mrs. Howell, "I must disturb the sacred ashes of the dead, to prevent the innocent from being unhappy. Oh, Adela, you were cruelly deceived! and the moment which gave you to Belgrave, rendered Oscar the most wretched of mankind. My heart was the repository of all his griefs; and how many are the bitter tears I have shed over them! Be composed," continued she, seeing Adela's agitation, "and a few moments will explain every thing to you."—She led her back to the root-house, and in a most explicit manner, informed her of Belgrave's treachery.—Adela burst into tears, as she concluded; she wept on Mrs. Howell's bosom, and acknowledged she had removed a weight of uneasiness from her mind. "Poor Oscar!" she continued, "how much would the knowledge of his misery have aggravated mine!"—"He acted nobly," said Mrs. Howell, "in concealing it, and amply will he be rewarded for such conduct." She then proceeded to inform Adela that she soon expected a visit from him.—There was

something

something in her look and manner which instantly excited the suspicion of Adela, who, blushing, starting, trembling, exclaimed, "He is already come!" —Mrs. Howell smiled, and a tear fell from her upon the soft hand of Adela.—"He is already come!" she repeated; "and he waits, oh how impatiently! to behold his Adela."

We may believe his patience was not put to a much longer test; but when Adela in reality beheld him as she entered the parlour, where she had left Mr. Howell, and where he waited for the re-appearance of her friend, she sunk beneath her emotion, upon that faithful bosom which had so long suffered the most excruciating pangs on her account, and it was many minutes ere she was sensible of the soft voice of Oscar. Oh, who shall paint his transports, after all his sufferings, to be thus rewarded! But, in the midst of his happiness, the idea of the poor General, who had so generously planned it, struck upon his heart with a pang of sorrow: "Oh, my Adela!" he cried, clasping her to his heart, as if doubly endeared by the remembrance, "is Oscar at last permitted to pour forth the fulness of his soul before you, to reveal its tenderness, to indulge the hope of calling you his—a hope which affords the delightful prospect of being able to contribute to your felicity? Yes, most generous of friends!" he exclaimed, raising his eyes to a picture of the General, "I will endeavour to evince my gratitude to you by my conduct to your child!"—Oh, how did the tear he shed

to

to the memory of her father, interest the heart of Adela!—her own fell with it; and she felt that the presence of that being to whom they were consecrated, was alone wanting to complete their happiness. It was long ere she was sufficiently composed to inquire the reason of Oscar's sudden appearance, and still longer ere he could inform her: Mrs. Marlowe's melancholy letter, he at last said, had brought him over, with the hope of being able to cheer her solitude, and also, he acknowledged, his own dejection, by mutual sympathy; from her cottage he had been directed to Woodlawn, and at Woodlawn received particulars, not only of her happiness, but his own.

Adela, who had never yet deviated from propriety, would not now infringe it, and resolutely determined, till the expiration of her mourning, not to bestow her hand on Oscar; but permitted him to hope, that, in the intervening space, most of his time might be devoted to her. It was necessary, however, to sanction that hope, by having proper society: she could not flatter herself with much longer retaining Mr. and Mrs. Howell, as the latter particularly was impatient to behold her son: Oscar therefore requested, and obtained permission from Adela, to write in her name to Lord and Lady Cherbury, and entreat their company at Woodlawn; promising she would then accompany them to Castle Carberry, and from thence to Dunreath Abbey—a tour which, previous to Oscar's leaving Wales, had been

been agreed on. The invitation was accepted, and, in a few days, Oscar beheld the two beings most valued by him in the world, introduced to each other: tears of rapture started to his eyes, as he saw his Adela folded to the bosom of his lovely sister, who called her the sweet restorer of her brother's happiness. Lord Cherbury was already acquainted with her, and, next to his Amanda, considered her the loveliest of human beings; and Lady Martha and Lady Araminta, who were also invited to Woodlawn, regarded her in the same light.

A few days after their arrival, Mrs. Howell prepared for her departure. Adela, who considered her as a second mother, could not behold those preparations without tears of real regret: "Oh, my Adela!" she exclaimed, "these tears flatter, yet distress me! I am pleased to think the child of my care regards me with such affection, but I am hurt to think she should consider my loss such an affliction. Oh, my child! may the endearments of the friends who surround you, steal you from all painful remembrances! Nature calls me from you; I sigh to behold my child—I sigh," she continued, with eyes suffused in tears, "to behold the precious earth which holds another!"

About three weeks after her departure, the whole party proceeded to Castle Carberry. Amanda could not re-enter it without emotions of the most painful nature: she recollected the moment in which she had quitted it, oppressed with sorrow and sickness, to attend

attend the closing period of a father's life; she wept, and sighed to think that the happiness he had prayed for, he could not behold. Lord Cherbury saw her emotions, and soothed them with the softest tenderness: it was due to that tenderness to conquer her dejection; and, in future, the remembance of her father was only attended with a pleasing melancholy. She did not delay visiting the Convent: the good-natured nuns crowded around her, and cried, laughed, and wished her joy, almost in the same moment, particularly Sister Mary: the Prioress's pleasure was of a less violent, but more affecting nature.

An almost constant scene of gaiety was kept up at the Castle—a gaiety, however, which did not prevent Lord and Lady Cherbury from inspecting into the situation of their poor tenants, whose wants they relieved, whose grievances they redressed, and whose hearts they cheered, by a promise of spending some months in every year at the Castle.

After continuing at it six weeks, they crossed over to Port Patrick, and from thence proceeded to Dunreath Abbey, which had been completely repaired, and furnished in a style equally modern and elegant; and here it was determined they should remain, till the solemnization of Lord Dunreath's nuptials. The time which intervened till the period appointed for them, was agreeably diversified by parties amongst the neighbouring families, and excursions about the country; but no hours were happier than those which the inhabitants of the Abbey passed when

when free from company—so truly were they united to each other by affection.

Lord Dunreath, soon after his return, waited upon the Marquis of Rosline, and, by his sister's desire, signified to him, that if a visit from her would be agreeable to the Marquis, she would pay it. This, however, was declined; and about the same period, Lady Dunreath died. Mrs. Bruce, who, from long habit, she was attached to, then retired to another part of Scotland, ashamed to remain where her conduct was known—a conduct which deeply affected her niece, whom Amanda visited immediately after her arrival, and found settled in a neat house near the town she had lodged in. She received Lady Cherbury with every demonstration of real pleasure, and both she and her little girl spent some time with her at the Abbey.

The happy period for completing the felicity of Oscar at last arrived: in the chapel where his parents were united, he received from the hand of Lord Cherbury the lovely object of his long-tried affections. The ceremony was only witnessed by his own particular friends; but at dinner, all the neighbouring families were assembled, and the tenants were entertained in the great hall, where dancing commenced at an early, and was continued to a late hour. And now having (to use the words of Adam) brought our story to the sum of earthly bliss, we shall conclude, first giving a brief account of the characters connected with it.

Lady

Lady Greystock, as one of the most distinguished, we shall first mention. After the death of Lady Euphrasia, she found her company no longer desired at the Marquis's, and accordingly repaired to Bath: here she had not been long, ere she became acquainted with a set of female puritans, who soon wrought a total change (I will not say a reformation) in her Ladyship's sentiments; and to give a convincing proof of this change, she was prevailed on to give her hand to one of those spruce young preachers, who shortly taught her (what indeed she had long wanted to learn) the doctrine of repentance; for most sincerely did she repent putting herself into his power. Vexation, disappointment, and grief, brought on a lingering illness, from which she never recovered. When convinced she was dying, she sent for Rushbrook, and made a full confession of her treachery and injustice to him: in consequence of which, he took immediate possession of his uncle's fortune; and thus, in the evening of his life, enjoyed a full recompence for the trials of its early period. Lady Greystock died with some degree of satisfaction, at the idea of disappointing her husband of the fortune she was convinced he had married her for.

Mrs. Howell, after visiting her son, retired to her husband's cottage, where their days glide on in a kind of pleasing melancholy: the happiness of that son and his Emily, is as perfect as happiness can be in this sublunary state.

Sir Charles Bingley, after studiously avoiding

Lord

Lord and Lady Cherbury for above two years, at last, by chance, was thrown in their way, and then had the pleasure of finding he was not so agitated by the sight of Amanda as he had dreaded. He did not refuse the invitations of Lord Cherbury; the domestic happiness he saw him enjoying, rendered his own unconnected and wandering life more unpleasant than ever to him. Lady Araminta Dormer was almost constantly in his company: no longer fascinated by Amanda, he could now see and admire her perfections: he soon made known his admiration; the declaration was not ungraciously received, and he offered his hand, and was accepted, an acceptance which put him in possession of happiness fully equal to Lord Cherbury's.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Rosline pass their days in gloomy retirement, regretful of the past, and hopeless of the future.—Freelove flutters about every public place, boasts of having carried off a Scotch heiress, and thinks, from that circumstance, he may now lay siege to any female heart, with a certainty of being successful.

To return once more to the sweet descendants of the Dunreath family. The goodness of heart, the simplicity of manners, which ever distinguished them, they still retain: from having been children of sorrow themselves, they feel for all who come under that denomination; and their charity is at once bestowed as a tribute, from gratitude to Heaven, and from humanity to want; from gratitude to that Being

ing who watched their unsheltered youth, who guarded them through innumerable perils, who placed them on the summit of prosperity, from whence, by dispensing his gifts around, they trust to be translated to a still greater height of happiness. Lady Dunreath's wish is fulfilled; to use her words, their past sorrows are only remembered, to teach them pity for the woes of others; their virtues have added to the renown of their ancestors, and entailed peace upon their own souls; their children, by all connected with them, are considered as blessings: gratitude has already consecrated their names, and their example inspires others with emulation to pursue their courses.

FINIS.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.